

سكنايند لاجل



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية والراي

Qadhafi sees better ties with Bush
NEW YORK (R) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi expects better relations with the Bush administration but he also accused U.S. forces of machine-gunning two Libyan pilots shot down last week, a newspaper interview published Tuesday said. The interview, with USA Today conducted in Tripoli, quoted Qadhafi as saying Sunday he expected the White House under George Bush will be "very sane, very wise." "We should bury this silly and stupid policy with the previous (Reagan) administration," the Libyan leader was quoted as saying. "It is possible to have dialogue. None of us is going to change the other's view by force." U.S. carrier-based fighter planes shot down two Libyan MIGs over the Mediterranean Jan. 4 after the MIGs made what the U.S. Defence Department called threatening moves. The parachutes of the Libyan pilots were spotted afterwards. Discussing the episode, Qadhafi told USA Today: "We believe that once the pilots had parachuted to safety they were followed up and machine-gunned. This is the action of America." The Washington Post reported Tuesday that Pentagon officials acknowledge the U.S. pilots shot down the Libyan MIG-23's without waiting for a "red" alert allowing them to fire at will.

Moscow names candidates
MOSCOW (AP) — The Communist Party short-circuited its promise of candidate elections Tuesday when it nominated only the ruling Politburo's 100 candidates for the party's 100 seats in the new parliament. A historic political reform passed last Soviet law Dec. 1 said "conditions would be created for nomination of an unlimited number of candidates" for the Congress of People's Deputies. Two-thirds of the 2,250 deputies are to be elected by the general public March 26. The other third of the deputies will be chosen by certain organizations, including the Communist Party, which has the right to choose 100 deputies. The election reform did not say whether the party members would vote directly on multiple candidates for their seats, and Kremlin watchers were waiting for Tuesday's plenum to find out. The official news agency TASS reported that party members suggested 31,500 nominees, but these were whittled down and finally just 100 were chosen by the 12-member ruling Politburo. Those 100 candidates were nominated by the party's 300-member Central Committee Tuesday, TASS said. But rank-and-file party members won't have the chance to vote on the party's candidates, TASS said.

Volume 14 Number 3982 AMMAN WEDNESDAY JANUARY 11, 1989, JUMADA AL THANI 2, 1409 Price: Jordan 100 fils; Syria 1 pound; Lebanon 1 pound; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams; Great Britain 25 pence

AROUND THE WORLD...

Howe fears Gulf ceasefire may collapse

DJIBOUTI (R) — British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe ended a tour of the Gulf Tuesday with a short visit to Djibouti, where he expressed concern over the ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq war. Howe, who arrived from the North Yemen capital of Sanaa on the last leg of a seven state trip, is the first British minister to visit this state at the mouth of the Red Sea. Speaking to reporters about his 10-day trip, during which he conferred with several powerful Arab leaders, Howe said: "There is great relief at the Iran-Iraq ceasefire, but general concern at continuing stalemate and continuing fears that the situation may deteriorate."

Khomeini sees hardships for Iran

NICOSIA (R) — Spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini urged Iranians Tuesday to make sacrifices to preserve their independence and warned of foreign plots against the country. In a message read on Tehran Radio, Khomeini called on workers and industrialists to revive the economy but ruled out any early improvement in living standards depressed by eight years of war against Iraq. "The people should make their choice: Either welfare and consumerism, or hardship and independence. This could take several years, but the people will definitely choose the latter," Khomeini said.

Vietnamese-Thai talks conclude

HANOI (AP) — The Vietnamese and Thai foreign ministers said Tuesday they were satisfied with their talks on ways to end Vietnam's 10-year-old intervention in Kampuchea. "The two sides are moving closer... but to say (there is) no more gap is not yet realistic because the gap is not yet solved by the Kampuchean parties," Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach said, referring to the warring factions in Kampuchea. Thai Foreign Minister Sudhi Savetsila cautiously described his two days of meetings with Thach as "good."

Karabakh committee members face trial

YEREVAN (R) — Authorities in Soviet Armenia have announced plans to prosecute members of the Karabakh Committee, a group pressing for the transfer of the disputed Azerbaijani territory of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. Interior Minister Usik Arutyunyan told a news conference in the Armenian capital Yerevan Monday that charges would be brought against several members of the banned group under a law covering "participation in group disorders."

Iran breaks up opium ring

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian police have arrested 46 members of a major drug ring who admitted to smuggling 52 tonnes of opium, Tehran Radio reported Tuesday. The ring, monitored in Cyprus, said the gang also smuggled weapons and had a record of armed robbery. It operated in eight of Iran's 24 provinces and its leaders had contacts with traffickers in the Gulf states, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The ring did not say over what period the ring smuggled the 52 tonnes of opium. Total opium seized in the year ending last March 20 was 34.8 tonnes, according to official Iranian figures.

Shevardnadze to visit Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze will visit Iran in the near future, Tehran Radio reported Monday. The broadcast said that Shevardnadze confirmed his visit in a meeting in Paris with his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati. "At this time the ground has been laid for expanding relations between Tehran and Moscow," the radio quoted Shevardnadze as saying.

Italy steps up airports security

ROME (R) — Italy is stepping up security at airport to guard against extremist attacks, the Interior Ministry said Tuesday. It said airport security procedures were discussed at a meeting between Interior Minister Antonio Gava and Transport Minister Giorgio Santuz. "Minister Gava gave an assurance that vigilance will be intensified and preventive measures will be reinforced" an Interior Ministry statement said. It gave no details.

Locust threat to continue till May

BAHRAIN (AP) — A locust plague threatening the countries of the Arabian peninsula could continue until May, a senior agricultural official warned. "A serious locust situation continues to exist, and there's a possibility from now till May that the locusts will hit from Africa through Saudi Arabia" to reach the other countries on the peninsula, Hassan Abdul Karim, director of farmer services of the Bahrain Ministry of Agriculture, said Monday. Similar warnings were also made by the Qatari News Agency and the English-language Saudi newspaper Arab News.

France denies reports of Libyan jet deal

PARIS (AFP) — The French Defence Ministry Monday rejected a reported published Sunday by the British weekly Sunday Telegraph that the French government had recently negotiated to sign a secret agreement to sell to Libya Mirage 2000 jet fighters. It described the report as "a diversion with hostile intentions against France."

Israeli army says PLO halted attacks

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli army Chief of Staff General Dan Shomron said Tuesday that PLO fighters had not attacked Israel since November. However Shomron, speaking to parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee, said attempts by Arab commandos to "infiltrate" into Israel from Lebanon increased in the past year. Israeli legislators quoted Shomron as saying: "The organisations over which the Palestine Liberation Organisation has full control have not been active since November. Certain activities which they had begun in preparation for attacks on Israel were halted as far as we know. However, we do not know of any order from these organisations to stop attacks on Israel."

Mubarak may visit U.S., W. Germany soon

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is expected to visit Washington and Bonn soon to campaign for an international Middle East peace conference and continued Western aid, diplomats said Tuesday. He would probably travel to the United States and West Germany in the first three months of the year and dates would be announced later, they said. Egyptian officials refused to confirm the travel plans. But one said a visit to Washington to establish contact with the new Bush administration was not excluded.

Israel says 8 commandos killed

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli troops operating north of Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" in southern Lebanon killed eight commandos, the army announced Tuesday. The clash was Saturday night west of the village of Aaranta, 18 kilometres north of the Israeli border, the army said. It gave no explanation for the delay in the announcement. The military command said an Israeli force encountered a squad of Lebanese guerrillas and opened fire, killing eight. It did not say whether there were any Israeli casualties.



His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday confers with two visiting U.S. senators (Petra photo)

U.S. senators find 'fluid' Israeli situation on peace

By Salameh B. Ne'matt Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Two U.S. senators Tuesday described as "fluid" the political situation within the Israeli coalition government and said there was room for a step-by-step approach to solving the Middle East problem. Republican senators Nancy Landon Kassebaum of Kansas and John McCain of Arizona, who arrived here Monday following talks with Israeli leaders, told the Jordan Times that the Israelis were floating proposals for a solution but that no specific initiative has yet evolved. The King explained the implications of the Kingdom's administrative and legal disengagement from the West Bank, pointing out that the move helped enhance Jordan-PLO ties, Petra said. He said the new Palestinian strategy was based on a greater awareness and readiness to shoulder responsibilities with the aim of reaching a just and peaceful settlement. Kassebaum told the Jordan Times earlier she believes Jordan has an important role to play towards a solution of the Palestine question and that the Kingdom's disengagement from the occupied West Bank paved the way for the PLO to initiate the peace process and help the PLO take the necessary steps to contribute to the cause of peace. McCain lamented that the outcome of the Israeli general elections did not produce any specific (Continued on page 2)

Shamir says he is willing to accept U.N. role in peace talks

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir Tuesday signalled for the first time that he was willing to accept a United Nations role in peace negotiations, saying direct talks could be initiated either by the superpowers or under U.N. auspices. Speaking to a visiting delegation of European Parliament members, Shamir insisted talks be held directly with the Arab parties. "Such negotiations can be launched under the auspices of the great powers or the United Nations, providing they refrain from any involvement in the substance of the talks," Shamir said. The statement represented a departure from Shamir's earlier opposition to U.N. involvement in the peace process. Shamir has contended U.N. participation would stack the deck against Israel, forcing "territorial and other concessions" from the Zionist state. The Arab states have urged that an international conference

Arafat, European team discuss peace

CAIRO (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, expected in Tunis to meet Dutch officials and a British politician, arrived unexpectedly in Cairo Tuesday. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman had an airport meeting with a Council of Europe delegation touring the Middle East. Spanish parliamentarian Miguel Angel Martinez said the council would invite parliamentarians from Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Israel and members of the PLO to a European Parliament conference in May or June. "We are seeking first-hand information about the peace process," he told reporters before meeting Arafat. The delegation, representing 23 countries, met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Monday. British Labour Party member Peter Harvey told reporters Mubarak personally asked Arafat to come to Cairo to meet them. Two Dutch Foreign Ministry officials left Tunis Tuesday afternoon after Arafat failed to show up there for two appointments, while British politician Gerald Kaufman went sightseeing to pass the time until his expected arrival. Earlier Tuesday, Arafat laid the cornerstone of a Palestinian embassy in Sanaa in the presence of North Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Later, he travelled to Aden where he and South Yemen's head of state, Haider Abu Bakr Al Attas, raised the flag over the PLO office there. Arafat was to arrive in Athens for an official visit Tuesday, a Greek government spokesman told reporters. "Arafat arrives today in Athens for an official visit. He will have talks with Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu and Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias," Sotiris Kostopoulos said. There had been no advance notice of the PLO leader's visit.

Palestinian killed, 4 others wounded

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A Palestinian was shot to death in mysterious circumstances in the occupied West Bank, and four other Palestinians were reported shot and wounded Tuesday in clashes with Israeli troops. Reports said Palestinian "collaborators" killed 27-year-old Kayed Muhammad Tmaizi Monday night in the village of Idna because he had stopped cooperating with them. Tmaizi was shot with three bullets and died on the way to a hospital in nearby Hebron, reports said. Family members told a reporter that Tmaizi was under increasing pressure from Israeli forces to renew his role as an informant. They said he stopped cooperating with Israeli officials when the uprising started 13 months ago. Tmaizi's relatives saw the assassins flee and take refuge in the home of another Idna man who is known as a collaborator, the reporter said. They said the attackers were later picked up by cars with Israeli licence plates. The army clamped a curfew on Idna and took Tmaizi's body from a hospital in nearby Hebron in order to determine the cause of death, a military official said. Meanwhile Tuesday, the army lifted curfews from four refugee camps in the Gaza Strip. Three Palestinians were shot and wounded in clashes in the southern Gaza Strip and one was wounded in a clash with troops in the West Bank town of Ramallah, reports and hospital officials said.

Qasem addresses Paris conference

'Israeli nuclear threat causes chemical arms spread in Mideast'

PARIS (Petra) — Israel's possession of nuclear weapons was the reason for the spread of chemical weapons in the Middle East, Jordan said Tuesday.

Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem told a 140-nation Paris conference on banning chemical weapons that Israel — which does not admit having nuclear arms — should sign the treaty and permit inspection of its capabilities. "The introduction of new weapons to our region is a consequence of Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and the ensuing sense of insecurity to all states and peoples in the region," Qasem said. Following are major excerpts from Qasem's speech: "Our meeting today aims at reaffirming the Geneva Protocol for the prohibition of the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and of bacteriological methods of warfare signed on 17 June, 1925. "The need to reaffirm our commitment to that protocol is all the more greater in view of the fact that it is the only multilateral instrument that prohibits the use of chemical weapons. We should in this respect avoid selectivity and double-standards with regard to the violations of international instruments in general and of the 1925 protocol in particular. "My country, being one of the states party to the protocol, is gratified to recall its clear record in fully complying with its letter and spirit. We would like on this occasion to urge states that have not yet done so, to consider urgently, according to the protocol. We would also like to laud progress achieved within the conference on disarmament in Geneva towards the elaboration of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and on their destruction. "We would like to express the hope that the efforts made during recent years in this field would lead to an early conclusion of a treaty as a step on the path of ridding humanity from the threat of all weapons of mass destruction. It is our view that, if such a treaty is to be successful as a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons, it is necessary, to address the legitimate need of self-defence of any state that may



Marwan Al Qasem

Iraq reaffirms quest for peace

BAGHDAD (Petra) — The vice-chairman of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, Izzat Ibrahim, said Tuesday that Iraq had always sought to achieve peace with Iran since the outbreak of the Gulf war more than eight years ago, but Tehran had rejected all calls for peace and refused to respond to the various requests by Iraq to exchange prisoners of war (PoWs). Addressing the second general conference of the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, held under the theme "Peace in Islam," Ibrahim pointed out that Iraq had renewed its calls for peace with Iran after every victory it achieved over Iran during the war and that Iraq had no territorial ambitions or aspirations whatsoever in Iranian territory. Also addressing the conference were the Egyptian, Iraqi and Saudi ministers of Awqaf and Islamic affairs, Mohammad Ali Mahjoub, Abdullah Fadel and Sheikh Abdul Wahab Abdul Wasi, respectively. Mahjoub said differences among Muslim countries beset Muslims throughout the world and contribute to serving the objectives of the enemies of the Muslim Nation. He highlighted the importance of the conference, saying that it convenes at a time when the Muslim World "is witnessing signs of peace in different parts of the world." He pointed out to the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the declaration of the Palestinian state, which he said had crowned the Palestinian people's struggle, and peace between Libya and Chad and between Morocco and its neighbours. Abdullah Fadel called on Muslim countries to make every possible effort to ensure an exchange of PoWs between Iraq and Iran and for protecting Islam from all conspiracies designed to distort its image. Sheikh Abdul Wasi stressed the need for ensuring peace for all Muslims and called for putting an end to fighting and disputes among Muslim countries. The four-day conference discusses a number of research papers and studies focused on peace in Islam and the counter-currents and the role of the Islamic institutions in countering such currents and tending off their dangers. Taking part in the conference are more than 300 Muslim scholars, intellectuals and ulamas, including Jordan's Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Aziz Al Khayyat, who heads the Jordanian delegation to the conference.

Midlands crash investigators keep all possibilities open

LOUGHBOROUGH, England (Agencies) — Investigators of the British airliner crash in which 44 people died said Tuesday there was no sign of mechanical failure or fire in the right-hand engine which the pilot shut down before impact. Ed Trimble, an official of the Department of Transport's Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AIB), said the flight recorders from the British Midland Airways Boeing 737 had been examined and "we now have a fairly clear idea of what happened." He refused to elaborate. Department of Transport spokesman Paul McKie said said Saboteur had been ruled out as the cause of Sunday night's crash. Britain's second major air disaster in less than a month. A bomb destroyed a Pan Am Boeing 747 over the Scottish border town of Lockerbie Dec. 21, killing 270 people. The 737, on a shuttle flight from London to Belfast, crashed near the M1 motorway 150 kilometres north of the capital as it tried to make an emergency landing at East Midlands airport. Transport Minister Paul Channon said the pilot, who was among the 82 survivors, had trouble with both engines during the flight. Experts are centering their investigation on the performance of the jet's CFM-56 engines, built by the U.S.-based General Electric Company (GE) and Snecma of France. "There is evidence at the moment of mechanical failure to the right engine," Trimble told reporters. He said there was no fire damage to the right engine but investigators were keeping all options open. William Tench, retired head of the AIB, suggested the crash may have been caused by a "technical mistake such as something incorrect being done to the engines during turnaround (servicing between flights), either inadvertently or deliberately." Accounts by Hunt and other survivors are expected to help investigators determine what caused the crash. Many survivors were well enough Monday to describe the last minutes of Flight BD92. Leicestershire police said 78 survivors were still hospitalised Tuesday. Thirteen were in intensive care units. Hunt, 43, a 22-year veteran with the airline, remained in poor condition with spine and leg fractures. But hospital officials said he had been able to speak with his wife. The Department of Transport said results of tests on the cockpit voice recorder and the digital flight data recorder were not expected for several days.

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Amal militiamen open heavy machinegun fire at Hizbollah positions at Kfar Hata village in South Lebanon

Amal-Hizbollah battles ebb amid fresh peace moves

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Fierce fighting gave way to sporadic exchanges of gunfire Tuesday as rival militias battled for control of mountain villages in southern Lebanon.

Villagers said at least 15,000 people had fled their homes for safety in cold, overcast weather as Iran labelled the battles a disaster and Tehran and Damascus sought to reconcile the warring groups.

Sources in the Amal militia said the battles with artillery, mortars and heavy machineguns died down after Amal captured 90 per cent of the Iqlim Al Tufah area from the Iranian-backed Hizbollah (Party of God).

An Amal spokesman said Monday night the militia took the village of Jubah after a three-pronged attack under heavy artillery cover.

But police said Hizbollah Tuesday beat off a tank-led assault by Amal who outnumbered them two to one.

A police spokesman said Amal fighters stormed positions held by Hizbollah fighters in Jubah behind a barrage of artillery and mortar fire.

The 1,000 Amal militiamen, spearheaded by T-54 battle tanks, launched their assault after two days of savage fighting for control of the region near Israel's self-designated "security zone" along

Lebanon's southern border. But police said the estimated 500 Hizbollah fighters, cornered in a triangular-shaped redoubt after being driven out of several strategic villages Monday, later counter-attacked and pushed Amal out of the hilltop village.

Amal "is currently launching another attack," the spokesman said.

Jubah, 16 kilometres southeast of the port city of Sidon, is the key to the Hizbollah-held sector. At least 65 people have died this year in the struggle between Amal and Hizbollah for control of Lebanon's Shi'ite.

There was no accurate casualty count from the latest fighting, which erupted 10 days ago after clashes in Beirut's southern suburbs, a bastion of pro-Iranian fundamentalists.

The independent Al Nahar newspaper quoted Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati as saying the fighting between the two groups was a disaster and that Iran and Syria were working to reconcile them.

Security sources said Hizbollah's presence in the battle area of southern Lebanon was limited to a few positions at 'Ain Buswar, Louwizeb and Jbal Sufi on the edge of the "security zone."

In Damascus, Syrian President Hafez Al Assad met Iranian De-

puty Foreign Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati to discuss the fighting in South Lebanon. Iranian sources in Damascus said Besharati, who arrived Monday night, was carrying a letter from Iranian President Ali Khamenei to Assad believed to be about the fighting.

The sources said Iran and Syria were seeking ways to reconcile Amal and Hizbollah and that Besharati was expected to visit Lebanon Tuesday or Wednesday.

The Iranian news agency said Monday Besharati had a message from the Iranian president for Hizbollah and Amal and would hold talks with the groups' leaders in Lebanon.

Mahmoud Hashemi Rafsanjani, an Iranian Foreign Ministry official, returned to Damascus late Monday from a day of talks with Lebanese Shi'ite leaders to brief Besharati, sources reported.

The bloodletting has deepened long-bitter hostilities between the rival factions.

Hizbollah seeks to create an Iranian-style Islamic republic in Lebanon.

The more secular, nationalist Amal rejects Tehran's influence and advocates a multi-sect government in which Muslims have an equal share of power with Lebanon's traditionally dominant Christians.

Soviets may not meet Afghan deadline

MOSCOW (Agencies) — The Kremlin's top envoy to Afghanistan said Tuesday there was "a serious danger" the Soviets would not resume their troop pullout in time to meet a U.N.-brokered Feb. 15 deadline for total withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan.

Yuli M. Vorontsov, the Soviets' first deputy foreign minister and ambassador to Kabul, blamed the United States and hard-line elements among the Afghan insurgents for a deteriorating situation in the country.

"The opposition says it wants to topple the current government in Kabul militarily," said Vorontsov, who recently met with leaders of the Afghan rebel groups in Iran and Pakistan. "They don't want to see a broad-based government."

Vorontsov also told reporters at a government news briefing that U.S. arms were still shipped

to the Mujahideen and that the American government had not given "any indication of its genuine desire to work for an Afghan settlement."

Asked if the Soviet Union might delay or suspend the withdrawal of the 50,000 troops it still has in Afghanistan, Vorontsov replied: "It's a serious danger. Things might shape up in such a way that the Soviet Union will be unable to do what we've decided to do as a matter of principle."

Vorontsov would not specify a timetable for Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan until the intentions of the rebels were clear.

"It is too early to talk about a schedule. We have to see how things shape up," Vorontsov said.

Under accords mediated by the United Nations in Geneva last April all Soviet troops must be out by Feb. 15.

Vorontsov said his talks with Afghan rebel leaders showed it was "quite possible to come to a political settlement provided there is a reasonable approach on both sides to allow all representatives to take part on an equal footing."

But he said a broad-based government could be formed in Afghanistan only when bloodshed had ceased and peace had been restored.

The rebels broke off talks with Vorontsov Monday, saying they would not meet Kremlin negotiators again until all Soviet troops had pulled out.

The talks stumbled over the

question of the composition of a government in Kabul after Moscow withdraws its troops.

Vorontsov said Moscow would continue to support the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), but the rebels insist that the current government, headed by President Najibullah, must fall.

Sibgatullah Mojaddidi, current chairman of a loose alliance of seven guerrilla parties based in Pakistan, told a news conference Monday that the deadlocked talks were over unless the Kremlin distanced itself from the PDPA.

"The Soviets' efforts to impose a government of their choice on the Afghan nation will protract the war and kill our people," said Mojaddidi of the moderate Afghan National Liberation Front.

Although the rebels won't agree to a joint government with the communists, Mojaddidi said

that if the ruling party member repent: "We shall give them amnesty. We shall accept them. We shall not kill them."

Vorontsov told Tuesday's news conference Soviet and Afghan government troops had not taken any offensive action since Jan. 1 and would continue this policy.

But he said Afghan rebels had not followed that example, thereby preventing a settlement.

"The opposition bears full responsibility for impeding the movement towards a settlement," he said.

Half of the 105,000 Soviet troops left by mid-August. In November, Soviet officials announced that they were suspending the second stage of the withdrawal because the military situation had worsened.

Hitherto Soviet officials have said in all public statements that they intend to observe the Geneva accords.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N. envoy begins Sahara mission

GENEVA (R) — A U.N. envoy chosen to oversee a peace plan for the Western Sahara began his first tour of the region Tuesday after talks between Morocco's King Hassan and Polisario guerrillas last week brought the war over the disputed territory closer to an end. Hector Gros Espiell, a Uruguayan diplomat, flew to Marrakesh to discuss with King Hassan a United Nations proposal for a referendum giving the inhabitants of Western Sahara a choice between integration with Morocco or independence. Diplomats said King Hassan's meeting with Polisario guerrillas last week — their first direct contact in 13 years of war — removed the main obstacle to a rapid agreement on details of the referendum. Gros Espiell's 12-day tour will also include visits to La'ayoun, the capital of the disputed territory, and to Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, which renounced all claims to the southern part of the Western Sahara in 1979. From there he will travel to the Algerian border town of Tindouf, where Polisario guerrillas have their headquarters, to meet their leader, Mohammed Abdul Aziz. Gros Espiell will confer with Algerian leaders in Algiers.

Tunis appoints activist in government

TUNIS (R) — The Tunisian government has appointed one of the country's most prominent Islamic militants to the Supreme Islamic Council, a government body which supervises mosques and Islamic education. Sheikh Abdul Fattah Mourou, secretary-general of the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI), was among 11 new members named to an expanded council Monday. The Tunis press said Tuesday, Mourou returned to Tunis from exile in September. In 1987, under former President Habib Bourguiba, he was sentenced to 10 years' hard labour on treason charges. He is joining the council only as an individual but political sources said the choice was the first sign in months that the government still intends to integrate Tunisia's Islamic movement into the political mainstream.

UNIFIL sends aid to Armenia

TYRE (AP) — Troops serving with the United Nations peacekeeping force in South Lebanon have donated \$6,000 to the victims of an earthquake in Armenia that killed tens of thousands last month. A U.N. communique said Monday, Major-Gen. Lars-Eric Wahlgren, commander of the 5,800-man U.N. Truce Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), handed the check to Soviet ambassador Vassili Kolotshin in Beirut. The communique said, UNIFIL is made up of troops from France, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Nepal, Ghana, Fiji and Senegal.

Chad reportedly grabs Libyan prisoner

KHARTOUM (AP) — Newspapers reported Tuesday that Chadian agents stormed the Sudanese embassy in N'djamena and seized a Libyan prisoner of war who had escaped detention and sought political asylum in Sudan. The newspapers said acting Foreign Minister Hassan Turabi and Defence Minister Abdul Maguid Khalil were visiting Chad's capital at the time. Chadian President Hissene Habre apologised to the delegation, the papers said. One, the semi-weekly Al Adwa, said the apology specified that the abductors were Habre's "security men." There was no comment from the Sudanese government, but the three independent newspapers that reported the story said Khartoum was not satisfied with Habre's apology. They said Chad was sending envoys with an official apology demanded by the Sudanese. In addition to Al Adwa, the dailies Al Usbu and Al Khartoum reported similar versions of the incident, which they said occurred last Tuesday.

Greek magistrate wounded in attack

ATHENS (AP) — A leading Athens investigating magistrate was shot and wounded by unknown assailants Tuesday as he left his home for work, police said. Constantinos Androulidakis, a magistrate who is known for his tough stand against extremists, was shot in the arm and leg by three men who fled in a stolen car. The getaway car also with stolen license plates, was later abandoned near the scene of the shooting, police said. Androulidakis was taken to hospital where officials said he was not in critical condition. No group took responsibility for the attack on Androulidakis at 8:10 a.m. (0610 GMT) as he stepped out of his apartment house located in the Zographos area of the capital, police said. Police believe the shooting was politically inspired and that Androulidakis' assailants only wounded him in an attempt to intimidate other investigating magistrates.

White House: No need for direct talks

Qadhafi vows to retaliate if U.S. attacks Rabta plant

LONDON (Agencies) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has vowed to retaliate if the United States attacks a factory southwest of Tripoli which Washington claims is designed to make chemical weapons.

In a speech broadcast by Libyan radio, Colonel Qadhafi said the factory at Rabta was for making pharmaceuticals.

"We built a factory for medicines," he said in the speech, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation.

"They said this constitutes danger. America with all its greatness said, I want to destroy this factory. Why?"

"Because it is a factory that constitutes a danger. Even the factories which make atom bombs are a cause of danger and so we should destroy them. And this factory we should get ready to destroy anything American which we can reach."

U.S. President Ronald Reagan says he does not rule out the option of a military strike against the plant, about 96 kilometres southwest of Tripoli.

Last Wednesday, U.S. fighters shot down two Libyan jets over the Mediterranean in what U.S. officials said was an act of self-defence unrelated to the Rabta plant.

Libya says its planes were attacked during an unarmed reconnaissance mission and said the

incident was a prelude to a larger-scale U.S. attack.

In Cairo, Egypt, Libyan dissident leader Mohammed Youssef Magariaf said in an interview Tuesday that his group needs U.S. help to overthrow Qadhafi, but advised Washington that bombing Libyan targets would be the wrong kind of help.

Magariaf, secretary-general of the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, denied an unattributed report in the London-based newsletter Africa Confidential that the front was being trained militarily by U.S. and Israeli experts in Chad, Cameroon and other African countries.

The front is considered the most powerful of anti-Qadhafi groups, with the most followers inside Libya.

In Washington, Pentagon spokesman Fred Hoffman would not comment on the Africa Confidential report. Another ranking U.S. defence official, speaking anonymously, denied the Defence Department was involved but said he could not speak for the Central Intelligence Agency.

The White House said Monday it saw no need for direct talks with Qadhafi about U.S.-Libyan relations, as Qadhafi had suggested.

"We don't have a problem with communications with Qadhafi. We have a problem with his actions. And so we feel there's no

need for direct discussions," White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater told reporters.

"What there is a need for is for them to destroy that plant and to improve their international responsibility," Fitzwater added.

Qadhafi, in a surprise meeting with reporters in Tripoli Saturday, invited the incoming Bush administration to hold direct talks on U.S.-Libyan ties.

Qadhafi also said Libya supported worldwide inspection of arms factories.

"The Bush administration must sit face to face with Libya so that we can agree on the issues in dispute," he said.

Qadhafi said Washington should have learned "a policy of force, threats, aircraft carriers and siege," would not work with Libya and that the only way was goodwill and negotiation.

Meanwhile, a company based in West Germany has been cleared of involvement in the outfitting of the alleged chemical weapons plant in Libya, a Bonn Finance Ministry spokesman said.

Spokesman Walter Priß said the Hamburg-based Pen Tsao medical material company, a subsidiary of Pen Tsao in Hong Kong, had been investigated by Hamburg state officials from Jan. 3 through Jan. 7.

"There is no evidence they are connected in the Libyan affair," he said.

Israeli threat causes chemical arms spread

(Continued from page 1)

process should be undiminished security on the basis of the lowest possible level of weapons and of armed forces.

"We believe it imperative that there should be faithful adherence to what was accepted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its 10th special session on disarmament namely that there should be a careful balance of responsibilities and mutual obligations among nuclear states and non-nuclear ones."

"We are particularly aware of this vital consideration since we

live in a region constantly threatened by the fact that Israel possess both a nuclear arsenal and a chemical one. Our concerns are all the more real in view of Israel's refusal to become party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty or to accept international verification of its nuclear capabilities. Serious efforts to make the Middle East a nuclear free zone had been made, but Israel's position constitutes an obstacle to that aim."

"The most effective way to bring about an end to the armed race in the Middle East consists in

reaching a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core the Palestinian question through an international peace conference, and in converting the ceasefire between Iraq and Iran into a state of comprehensive and durable peace."

"We hope that this would lead to the region becoming a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in a manner that guarantees undiminished security for states in the region and strengthens international peace and security."

U.S. senators find 'fluid' Israeli situation

(Continued from page 1)

response vis-a-vis Palestinian and other peace initiatives. However, he added, "we were assured by the prime minister (Shamir) that Israel will propose new initiatives to further the peace process."

The two senators, who held talks with Prime Minister Zaid Rifai Monday, agreed that the new administration of President-elect George Bush was more likely to continue to build on the initiatives of the present administration on the basic issues.

Kassebaum, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, described Bush as a friend of the King and that personal familiarity between the two leaders was conducive to a better understanding of the outstanding issues.

Commenting on U.S. threats to bomb a Libyan plant in Rabta, which Washington claims has the capability to produce chemical

weapons, McCain, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said a military option should not be ruled out if all other means to contain the alleged threat were exhausted.

Libya denies the U.S. claim and has called for an international inspection of the plant provided other countries are also subject to similar inspection.

Kassebaum said she was "disappointed" with attempts to "divert the attention from chemical weapons to nuclear weapons" during an international conference held in Paris. McCain agreed that diverting attention from efforts to ban chemical weapons will not help the ongoing effort to achieve progress in that area.

McCain asserted that "Americans are frustrated" with the alleged assistance provided by West Germany for building what the U.S. claims is a chemical

weapons factory. The Senator said that he and his colleagues saw facts showing West German involvement but refused to reveal the source of his information. He said Washington was trying to convince West Germany to halt its involvement.

The two senators left Amman later in the day after meeting with Amman Forces Chief of Staff Fathi Abu Taleb. Petra said they discussed "the military situation in the region and ways of cooperation between the two countries and issues of mutual concern." They are scheduled to hold similar meetings in Syria and Egypt.

Also Tuesday, the King, Rifai and Information Minister Hani Khasawneh held talks with a visiting three-member congressional delegation during which they also discussed the Middle East situation and the latest developments in the area.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:40 Programme review
15:45 Children's programmes
17:10 Programme on plants
17:35 Out of World
18:00 News summary in Arabic
18:05 Cairo news message
18:15 Arabic series
19:00 Local programme
19:30 Common mistakes
19:40 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:30 Programme review
21:40 Wrestling
22:40 Varities programme
23:00 News summary in Arabic
23:10 Programme continued

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Champs Elysees
19:00 News in French

19:15 Aujourd'hui en Jordanie
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Don't wait up
21:10 Panorama
22:00 News in English
22:30 Shadow on the Sun

PRAYER TIMES

05:11 Fajr
06:32 Sunrise
11:43 Dhuhr
14:36 'Asr
16:54 Maghreb
18:15 Isha

CHURCHES

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785.
St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church, Tel. 661757.
Terzianita Church, Tel. 62366.
Church of the Annunciation, Tel.

623541.
Anglican Church, Tel. 625385, Tel. 623543.
Armenian Catholic Church, Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church, Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church, Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church, Tel. 685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tel. 811293.
Rainbow Congregation, Tel. 822605.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Tel. 815817, 821264.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be partly cloudy and relatively cold with a chance for scattered showers. Winds will be southwesterly moderate to fresh. In Amman, it will be partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain. Winds will be southerly

fresh and seas rough.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 17 / 8
Aqaba 10 / 17
Dead Sea 0 / 9
Jordan Valley 10 / 16

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 3, Aqaba 17. Humidity readings: Amman 70 per cent, Aqaba 85 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Arif Al Ashhab 602507
Dr. Adel Dabboud 393644
Dr. Youssef Al Hourani 625478
Dr. Akram Sarhan 994611
Firas pharmacy 601912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asoud pharmacy 637053

Naroukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649865
Shamsi pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Fiddiya Jobour (—)
Al Shura'a pharmacy 985238

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 620509/93
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843002
Traffic Police 656390/91
Public Security Department 650000 / 685111
Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information 121
(directory assistance)
Overseas Calls 0312
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661646
Abdali Telephones 69161/15
The Islamic, Abdali 771010
Queen Abla Hospital 69161/15
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
Ibn Al Sina Hospital (09)986732
IBRD:
Princess Beama Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272755
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)214113

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813812/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644216
Alkhil Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman
Palestine, Shamsi 636140
Shamsi Hospital 664174
University Hospital 665131
Al-Mushter Hospital 665545
The Islamic, Abdali 666172/12
Al-Fidhi, Abdali 666172/12
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 771010
Central Amman Telephone 771112
Repairs 69161/15
Queen Abla Hospital 69161/15
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
Ibn Al Sina Hospital (09)986732
IBRD:
Princess Beama Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272755
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)214113

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in file per kg.

Apple 450 / 380
Banana 300 / 300
Banana (Mukhamas) 300 / 320
Beans 320 / 140
Broad beans 750 / 650
Cabbage 130 / 100
Carrots 240 / 200
Cauliflowers 200 / 160
Cucumbers 550 / 450
Dates 600 / 500
Eggplant (large) 130 / 80
Eggplant (small) 130 / 120
Garlic 300 / 240
Grapefruit 170 / 140
Lemon 180 / 140
Marrow (large) 180 / 120
Marrow (small) 310 / 250
Orange (Shamouni) 340 / 300
Orange (Zamouni) 340 / 300
Orange (local) 280 / 240
Onion (dry) 120 / 80
Pepper (red) 550 / 450
Pepper (green) 300 / 280
Potato 250 / 200
Spinach 240 / 200
Tomatoes 250 / 200
Turnips 250 / 200

Jordan calls for ensuring free education for Palestinians under Israeli occupation

GENEVA (Petra) — Jordan has urged an international conference on education in Geneva to recommend measures that would ensure the right of Palestinian people to free education and to condemn Israel's racist policies carried out against the Palestinian people under its rule.

"Israel has been depriving Palestinian children of education after depriving them of the right to live in peace in their own homeland. And it insists on rejecting peace bids designed to bring about security and stability to the whole Middle East region through an international peace conference," Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouqan Hindawi said in his address to the conference which was organised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The minister said that Israel's policies should be condemned until the Jewish state responds favourably to the will of the international community and the call of peace.

Hindawi presented to the conference a general outline about education in Jordan where, he said, those acquiring

education between the age of six and 12 account for 98 per cent of the total population.

"At present students at schools, community colleges and universities together form more than one third of the entire population of the Kingdom," the minister noted.

"Thus Jordan is considered among the foremost nations backing UNESCO's endeavours to eradicate illiteracy, spread education and provide equal opportunities in education to all sectors of the population."

"For Jordan, education is an essential component in the ongoing economic and social process; and education of the new generation is considered as a basic prerequisite for progress," the minister added.

Jordan has thus far completed successfully the stage of universalising education at its various levels, and is now embarking on the second stage which entails working on better quality of education to help promote the cultural, social and economic process in the Kingdom, Hindawi pointed out.

To achieve the goal, the minister explained, a national education conference was held



Thouqan Hindawi

in Amman in 1987 when leading educationists, teachers and education officials worked out a chart that would serve the Kingdom and take it into the 21st century.

"The conference aimed to raise the level and improve the educational outputs to pave the way for a new generation that will cope with the technology age, and to take measures to link education to the needs of the community and the requirements of the labour market," the minister pointed out.

Hindawi said that Jordan now has four universities, 56 community colleges and that at

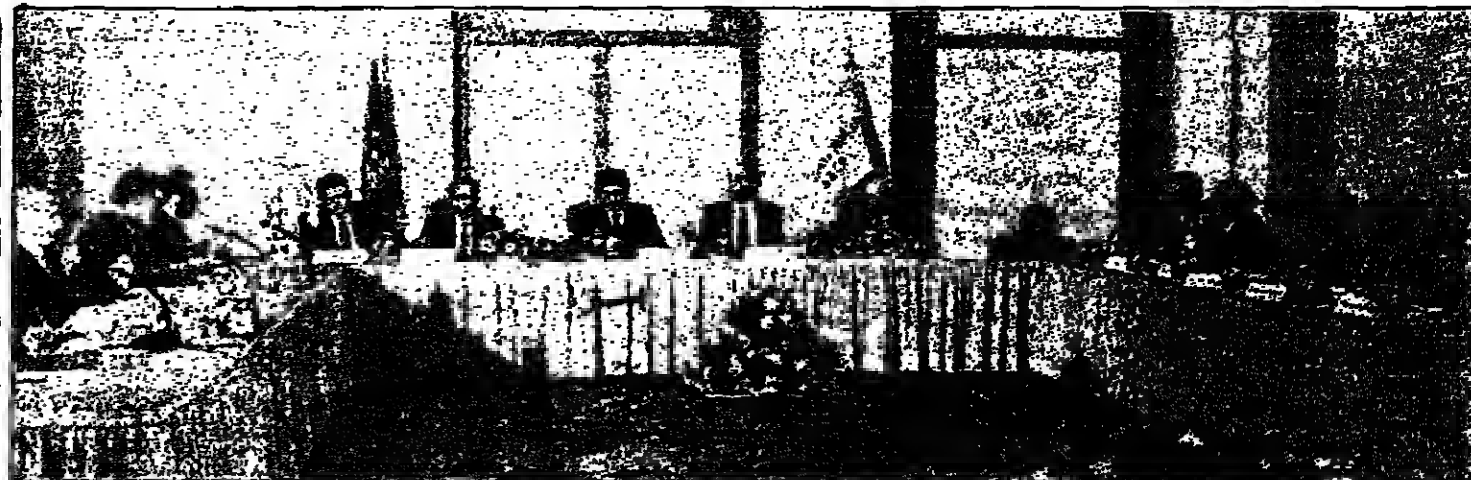
least 95,000 students are now involved in post secondary education studies at these educational institutions inside Jordan or at universities abroad.

The minister explained the role of the Council of Higher Education which, he said, takes charge of plans for community colleges and decides on all matters related to higher education.

As a result of strenuous efforts to provide education to all citizens, he said, university trained people now form nearly eight per cent of the total human resources in the Kingdom.

"But the Kingdom has a long way to go and is making plans for adapting its academic and vocational education to the labour market needs," the minister said. "This is an imperative task since the country is expected to have more than half a million students and nearly four-and-a-half million inhabitants by the end of the present century."

Later Hindawi was elected as deputy chairman of the conference, and afterwards the minister had a meeting with the UNESCO director general to discuss the organisation's programmes and Jordan's role to support its endeavours.



Representatives of Arab air carriers and financial institutions meet Tuesday in Amman to discuss the feasibility study to form a pan-Arab aviation financing company (Petra photo)

Arab carriers to form aviation financing company in early 1989

By Rania Atalla
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Arab Air Carriers' Organisation (AACO) Tuesday announced that a pan-Arab aviation financing company would be formed by the first quarter of 1989 to help finance the purchase and leasing of aircraft to Arab Air Carriers in the region.

The formation of such a financing company comes as a response to challenges created by the merger of major U.S. airlines as well as the prospective challenge of Europe's integrated carriers in 1992.

A steering committee made up of representatives of Arab air carriers and financial institutions met Tuesday to discuss the preliminary feasibility study for the project, presented by the international consultancy firm Arthur D.

Little.

Members of the committee include AACO Secretary General Adil Dajani, chairman of Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ), Kuwait Airways (KA) and Royal Air Maroc (RAM), in addition to the Gulf International Bank, the Gulf Investment Company and the International Arab Investment Bank.

Dajani said the formation of the proposed company represents a "unique experience in the world," since both the customers (Arab air carriers) and the financiers are taking part in the project.

"We are being watched by the whole aviation world," which will be looking to see if the project succeeds, Dajani told the Jordan Times. He said an AACO study had shown that within the next decade, Arab air carriers would need to replace 150 of their old planes and purchase or lease 50 other aircraft to fulfill their growth and development plans.

With the average cost of an aircraft estimated at \$50 million, Dajani said, costs for the company would be expected to reach

\$10 billion over the next decade.

"That is a lot of money for air carriers to raise, and since Arab financial institutions do not have financing departments for the (Arab) aerospace sector, we thought of creating a company that would bring Arab finance institutions and Arab air carriers together," Dajani said.

RJ's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Ali Ghandour said the steering committee had discussed the state of the aviation industry in the world, and the international aircraft leasing market in particular, in order to assess the viability of an Arab aviation financing company and determine the factors needed to successfully establish an Arab air financing company.

"Arab airlines have to standardise their equipment so that they can join forces and cooperate in the training and maintenance fields," Ghandour told the Jordan Times. "And this venture (between Arab air carriers and Arab financial institutions) is (being formed) to ensure the availability of finances towards that end."

He said Arab air carriers now have to determine their future needs for aircraft, and to standardise their specifications for aircraft. Once that is accomplished, Ghandour said, Arab air carriers would be able to establish a common regional maintenance and training centre to serve their ends.

According to Dajani, 13 Arab air carriers, in addition to the three Arab financial institutions, had so far expressed interest in the prospective company. He added that once the company is established, its shares would be floated for the purposes of having "institutional participation" among countries involved in the project.

Ghandour said that all Arab air carriers would be able to join the company once it is established.

During a press conference marking RJ's 25th anniversary last month, Ghandour had called for coordination and integration among Arab airlines in the East Mediterranean region in order to counter the challenge presented by the integration of European carriers in 1992.

TCC COLLECTS OVER JD 46 M: The telecommunications Corporation last year collected JD 46,104,563 in telephone subscriptions and fees, compared with JD 37,593,583 in the year 1987, thus achieving an increase of JD 8,510,980 over 1987 figures, Transport and Telecommunications Minister Khaled Al Haj Hassan said Tuesday. The minister was speaking at a meeting of the TCC board of directors, during which the board discussed the steps for privatisation of the corporation. Haj Hassan also said that the corporation has provided seven direct telephones to each 100 citizens. (Petra)

Snow closes several roads in south Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Public Security Department (PSD) Tuesday reported the closure of a number of roads in Jordan due to the accumulation of snow that fell Monday evening and Tuesday morning.

It said that the Shobak-Wadi Moussa, Jarba-Manshiab, Wadi Moussa-Jarba, Petra-Ras Al Naqab and Athroh-Wadi Moussa roads were blocked with snow and that visibility in these areas

was very poor.

The Department of Meteorology earlier reported that Jordan was affected by a depression centered over Cyprus and that as a result several cold fronts were liable to bring rain and snow to Jordan and the Eastern Mediterranean region.

It named Ajloun and Sharrah mountains as probable districts where snow might fall heavily.

Turkish aide leaves after signing accord in Amman

AMMAN (Petra) — A Turkish delegation left for home Tuesday after signing an agreement here, paving the way for Turkish Muslims to enjoy facilities and services provided by the Kingdom to pilgrims on their way to Saudi Arabia.

The delegation, led by Mr. Saifuddin Al Yaziji, director of the Turkish Religious Affairs Department, met Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Aziz Al Khayyat and other officials for talks on bilateral cooperation in religious affairs.

According to the agreement signed by Al Yaziji and Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Secretary General Ahmad Hilayel, Turkish pilgrims travelling by land will cross into Jordan from Syria through the border post of Ramtha where a pilgrims city has been set up for their accommodation.

The pilgrims will also be put up at Ma'an pilgrims city and the Mudawwara border post provided lists of the pilgrims' names are supplied to the concerned Jordanian authorities upon their

entry into the Kingdom.

Under the agreement Jordan will provide facilities for the Turkish pilgrims vehicles along the route to the holy places in Mecca and Medina and will allow the Turkish authorities to open an emergency clinic at Ma'an and Mudawwara for the benefit of the travellers.

Following the Turkish delegation's departure, Hilayel announced that the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has set up a technical team to supervise restoration work at pilgrims towns and border resthouses in the Kingdom to prepare them for the visiting pilgrims.

Hilayel said also that the ministry will set up guidance teams to accompany the pilgrims and to provide them with essential services during their stay in Jordan.

He expected 50,000 non-Jordanian pilgrims to pass through Jordanian territory on their way to Mecca and Medina in the coming pilgrimage season which will be in early summer of this year.

Old Amman marketplace to be demolished in March

AMMAN (J.T.) — The old Amman marketplace will be demolished towards the end of March to make room for development of streets and ease the flow of traffic downtown, according to a decision announced by Greater Amman Mayor Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh.

The decision was originally taken by the municipal council in the past year as a first stage to develop the central regions of the capital. Rawabdeh said in a statement quoted by Al Ra'i Araic daily Tuesday.

Once the old marketplace had been removed there will be a 12-metre street running directly from areas in the central part of the city towards the Saif Al Sail Street instead of the present six-metre street which now goes around Al Hussein Mosque, the report said.

It said that in the process, a total of 20 stores will be demolished and their owners will be compensated.



Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh

AL JIZA DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE: Actual development expenditure in Al Jiza Development unit in Amman Governorate totalled JD 367,458 during the year 1988, Madaba district Governor Khalid Khreisat said Tuesday. Khreisat also said that work is currently underway in the construction of two health centres in Jiza and Natl at a total cost of JD 113,994. (Petra)

Ministry preparing report on Jordan's environment

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment is preparing a comprehensive report on the environment situation in Jordan to serve as a national document which would later be represented to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

A statement Tuesday said that the ministry was now gathering information from various specialised and concerned organisations in the form of a questionnaire prepared for this purpose. Once completed the study will be published in Arabic and English and distributed to all concerned authorities around the world, the statement said.

According to the statement a team of Swedish experts is due here on Jan. 28 on a two-week visit to help in the ministry's efforts.

The team will conduct a study on a number of regions in Zarqa, and Aqaba and districts sur-

rounding industrial businesses in those areas in the course of the study, the statement added.

A three-day seminar to deal with the negative effects of agricultural projects on the environment held here last month, recommended that the government speed up work on a new environment law and called for the creation of a specialised company to deal with the organic fertilisers (manure) to help reduce the spread of flies and other harmful insects.

The seminar also recommended that the Ministry of Water and Irrigation work out a comprehensive plan to deal with the treated wastewater coming out from olive oil presses and urged the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company to cooperate with Jordanian universities to study the prospect of recycling the treated wastewater from its plants at Hassa, Ruseifa and Wadi Al Abiad.

Tabbaa returns from Oman

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Hamdi Tabbaa and the accompanying delegation returned to Amman Tuesday after taking part in the meeting of the Joint Jordanian-Omani Committee, which concluded its meetings in Muscat Monday.

In an arrival statement Tabbaa said the committee discussed scopes of cooperation in the economic and commercial fields and has agreed to setting up a Jordanian-Omani company with a capital of \$10 million and to establishing a Jordanian-Omani company for marketing fresh Omani fish in the Arab region with its headquarters in Amman.

Tabbaa noted that the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce (FJCC) has been entrusted with drawing up the necessary studies on this subject. Tabbaa said it has been agreed at the meetings that Jordan will provide Oman with the skilled Jordanian cadres in the various fields to assist in the implementation of the Omani development projects.

The two sides also agreed to build meetings for representatives of private sectors from both countries, in implementation of the provisions of the protocol concluded between the FJCC and the Omani Chamber of Industry.

The Jordanian side also reached an agreement with the Omani side for exporting Jordanian vegetables and fruit, and tomato paste to Oman.

The Jordanian side to the meetings included president of the FJCC, chairman of Amman Chamber of Industry and representatives for the Ministries of Transport and Telecommunications, Industry and Commerce, and the Jordanian Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company.

Haj Hassan praises Aqaba port workers

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Transport and Telecommunications Khaled Al Haj Hassan Tuesday expressed appreciation of efforts exerted by workers at the Jordan Ports Corporation in Aqaba during Monday's storm which posed a great threat to the port facilities and the vessels docked there.

"The workers are to be commended for their operations to rescue people and protect the vessels and facilities during a nine-hour storm that unexpectedly hit the port area, and their role in minimising damage and material losses," the minister said in a statement.

The Red Sea port was exposed to a sudden storm causing very high waves and very rough seas, shifting vessels from their berths and "rendering the task of mooring almost impossible."

The minister said that it was only due to the men's courageous efforts that no losses of any goods were incurred.

Arab strategic conference ends

CAIRO (Petra) — An Arab strategic conference ended in Cairo Tuesday after reviewing several working papers presented by Jordanian and Egyptian specialists and scientists.

Apart from Jordan and Egypt, the three-day conference was attended by delegates from a number of Arab countries.

Dr. Adnan Bakhit, dean of the University of Jordan's Scientific Research Department and head of the university-based Centre for Strategic Studies, delivered a speech for Jordan at the final

session, underlining the importance of the deliberations which, he said, complement the 1987 Amman conference that dealt with the Arab order.

Later Bakhit said in a statement that the centre for strategic studies in Jordan groups scientists and researchers who cooperate with similar centres in Europe, Africa and the United States.

Following the conclusion of the conference, it was announced that Al Ahran Centre for Strategic Studies and the University of Jordan's Centre, which

organised the meeting, agreed to expand their cooperation with other Arab states to conduct research on cultural trends in the Arab World, East-West detente and their impact on the Arab nation, and the Al Maghrab unity.

Agreement was also reached by the two sides to hold joint research work and to hold seminars in which working papers that will be presented to future conferences will be reviewed.

The third strategic conference is to be held in Morocco.

ACC to help Jordan Valley farmers

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) intends to help Jordan Valley farmers make up for their losses incurred as a result of the severe damage to their crops during last week's frost, according to reports in the local press Tuesday.

The report quoted Burhan Shbarbi, ACC's deputy director general as saying that one way of helping the farmers was to reschedule their loans, thus postponing their dues to the corporation.

According to the ACC law, Shbarbi noted, the corporation cannot write off the farmers' loans, but indeed everything is up to the government which in 1985 and 1986 wrote off interest on loans to farmers who incurred similar losses.

Al Ra'i daily conducted a field

tour of damaged areas in the valley and was told by the Jordan Valley Farmers Association's board Chairman Talal Al Ghazawi that the frost wave was a severe blow to the farmers who need at least one and half years to readjust their lands, to become fully productive again.

Ghazawi estimated the loss in some areas at JD 400 per dunum of land planted with vegetables like marrows, potatoes, pepper, eggplant and tomatoes.

He suggested that government-appointed teams visit the affected land to make a full assessment of the damage before any compensation can be paid in the way of encouraging the farmers to pursue their crop-growing operations.

Ghazawi also proposed the establishment of an emergency fund that can pay out compensa-

tion to farmers under such severe conditions

The association's former Chairman Adel Shamaileh said that banana plantations incurred a 100 per cent loss in some cases, noting that the damage would no doubt affect production and cause shortages in the local market.

Shortage of tomatoes, potatoes, marrows and pepper, Shamaileh said, will also be felt in the local markets.

A leading Jordan Valley landowner Nimer Zinati estimated that JD 150 were the total input in each dunum of land that produces vegetables at the rate of three tonnes annually and said that in bumper harvests farmers would normally expect JD 600 to JD 700 in revenues from each dunum.

Teams eliminate locust swarms

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — The Ministry of Agriculture has announced that teams involved in fighting locusts in south eastern regions of the country have eliminated all swarms that invaded the Kingdom in the past month and that the invaded areas are now completely free of the dangerous pests.

But the announcement warned that the locusts were expected to return to the country in the early spring as projected by the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) which said that locust danger was expected to haunt the Eastern Mediterranean and North African regions for at least four or five years.

The ministry's announcement called for concerted public and private efforts and organised plans for combating the pest and confronting future threats to the country's vegetation.

The ministry said that its teams, which closely maintained

cooperation with the Armed Forces, the Royal Jordanian Air Force and the Badia Security Forces in eliminating the locusts, will continue to pursue such collaboration that should include other government departments and public institutions.

To attain this end, the announcement noted, the Kingdom has been divided into two main zones where responsibilities will be defined for each of the parties involved in the locust-combat operations.

The first of these zones extends from Wadi Al Azhab in the west to the south and south east and east encompassing all of the badia regions in Jordan. This zone it added will be under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the Armed Forces and the Badia and Border Police Forces since it is the main area exposed to locust invasions coming from neighbouring states, and because

it is a desert region away from densely populated areas.

The second zone includes the rest of the territories in the country which will be under the direct supervision of provincial governors in cooperation with public and private organisations and population settlements.

At least three main waves of locusts invaded the south and south eastern regions of the country after crossing over from Saudi Arabia.

The Ministry of Agriculture organised the fight in the affected areas which were visited by His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan at the height of the invasions.

The ministry's statement said that it was continuing to monitor the situation along the border areas and coordinating its actions with neighbouring countries and FAO in the fight against the locusts.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- * An exhibition of works by Contemporary Arab Artists at Al Wasiti Art Gallery.
- * The Iraqi Cultural Week which includes an exhibition by the Iraqi artist Salim Al Madamghah and an exhibition of children's paintings and children's literary and cultural books, at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- * An exhibition entitled "New Museum Buildings in the Federal Republic of Germany" at the Yarmouk University — 11:00 a.m.
- * A plastic art exhibition by Mohammad Kamal, Samir Al Sab' and Nihal Saleh at the Housing Bank Gallery.
- * An exhibition of photos and videos on "La Defense", a new district in Paris which became a symbol of architectural creativity, at the French Cultural Centre.

BAZAAR

- * A charity bazaar that includes wooden handicrafts, embroideries, artificial flowers, children's toys and cultural books at Ala'a Centre, Hittin Refugee Camp.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975

جوردين تايمز يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times Advertising Department.

Save Lebanon's soul

ONE of the biggest tragedies of our time is to see Lebanon, once a peaceful country, turns into a slaughter house without causing as much as a blink in the international community including the Arab World. The killing in Lebanon has been going on for so long that man has become apathetic to the crimes against humanity that have become the order of the day in that country. And so when horrific atrocities are committed in South Lebanon in the course of the fratricidal fighting between Amal militiamen and their Hizbollah rivals, the world's reaction has become so hardened and callous to the point of insensitivity to the knife, hacking and throat cutting that goes on between the two sides.

In contrast, when a plane crashes or a train jumps off its rail or when even cars become entangled in collisions, the world's concern rises up to the challenge and the emotions and sympathies generated by such accidents accelerate and rightly so to reach zenith proportions.

Why the world has become so numb to the agonies and cries for help from Lebanon and the Lebanese is something that is most shocking. How many more headless bodies must the world see and count in Lebanon before it begins to take heed and action? It is utterly disgraceful and inhuman to pretend that the situation in Lebanon has deteriorated to a stage that can no longer be reversed. Has man's insensitivity descended to the lowest of all gutters by arguing that the Lebanese must be left alone to stew in their own blood till the last drop is shed in the stupidest and damnest effort to satisfy the ugliest lusts for power and clout in that forsaken country? Surely there is still room for international action to stop the haemorrhage in Lebanon; but the first step lies in reawakening the world to the continuous blood-letting in Lebanon and rekindling its concern. It must be remembered that whenever a drop of blood pours out of a Lebanese vein, humanity bleeds as well.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i daily on Tuesday discussed nuclear and chemical weapons both of which threaten human civilisation and whose elimination the world community strives for. The paper said that the presence of such weapons contradict existence and the cause of living for human kind and their absence means the prevalence of justice, peace and equality. These kinds of weapons, it said, can only come from nations practising injustice and tend to pillage the resources of the poorer and less developed nations on earth. The paper referred to the on-going deliberations at the chemical weapons conference in Paris and said that regardless of what is being said at that conference it should be emphasised that the world community must deal with the fact that those nations with nuclear and chemical weapons are responsible for all the conflicts that arise on our globe and that the Third World nations were and still are the victims of the greed and atrocities of the powerful nations. What should be discussed at the conference, the paper concluded, is the question of how to maintain the survival of the human race and the decision that must be taken should be a total destruction of the nuclear and chemical arsenals.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily tackles the coming Arab League Council's session in Tunis which is to be held Wednesday to discuss Washington's open threats to Libya over the question of an alleged chemical plant in that country. Mahmoud Al Rimawi says that the Arab foreign ministers will also discuss the situation in Lebanon and means to bring about a reconciliation in that embattled nation. Rimawi noted that Arab states have already declared solidarity with Tripoli and there would be no need for them to make the same declaration at the Tunis meeting. The U.S. escalation of tension in the Mediterranean and the use of force against an Arab country is something deplorable indeed and can only trigger further violence in the region, the writer adds. But what the Arabs must do at the coming meeting regarding the American threats is to take a serious unified action warning Washington of the adverse consequences that might ensue from repeated aggression on Libya, the writer continues. He says that the Arab Nation should not declare war on the U.S. nor should it stick to the verbal and meaningless declaration of support for Tripoli but should rather be ready to take a firm action with regard to its relations with the U.S.

Al Dustour wrote on the uprising in the occupied Palestinian land which has now entered its 14th month. The Palestinian people under the yoke of Israeli colonial rule are more determined than ever before to pursue the just struggle for freedom and for ending the Israeli occupation of Arab land, the paper noted. It said that the Palestinians have now acquired experience through their continued struggle against the Zionists and are in a position to escalate their resistance. Moreover, the continued resistance and the Arab revolt against the invaders are serving as a catalyst for joint Arab action and more solidarity among the Arab states, the paper added. It said that the heroic stand of the Palestinian people under occupation should prompt the Arabs to increase their backing to them and take concerted action to safeguard Arab national interests.

Sawt Al Shaab daily commented on King Hussein's meeting Monday with the provincial governors to discuss guidelines for the implementation of regional development. The series of development seminars held in the Kingdom have focused attention on the need for the development of the hadia and rural regions and underlined the need for concerted action on the part of all sectors to achieve comprehensive development benefiting all parts of the country, the paper said. The present stage, the paper said, makes it imperative on all Jordanians who have successfully laid down the economic infrastructure, to pursue their endeavours for construction.

TEN DAYS away from a new administration taking office in Washington and ten days into the New Year, the question that lingers is: Will the new American administration make any substantial changes in its policy that would make 1989 the year of peace in the Middle East?

There is little disagreement among analysts and diplomats that the Reagan administration's move to lift the ban on formal contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) after a 13-year hiatus was a positive step in the right direction. The status quo that was set in 1975 by Henry Kissinger was broken and the ground appears to be set for a significant shift in American policy.

However, whether this shift will actually take place or what form it will assume remains doubtful to many. While some analysts and diplomats believe that Washington is serious in its declared drive for peace in the Middle East, others argue that the U.S. move to open dialogue with the PLO was tactical rather than strategic and aimed at easing international pressure and isolation. More than anything else, many believe that the U.S. gesture is aimed at quelling the year-long intifada; the catalyst in the entire process.

Analysts expect the seriousness of American intentions to crystallise itself in the near future in practical American steps towards the PLO and Israel.

The role of the Soviet Union, the importance of European pressure on the concerned parties, Arab unity and support for the intifada and Jordanian-Palestinian relations are expected to be the main factors pushing the U.S. to pressure Israel to soften its stand and drop its objections to an international peace conference.

Optimists see an international conference being held within the next six months and expect a preparatory committee to be formed while contacts among all concerned parties continue. The committee, they say, will attempt to iron out some of the fundamental differences and set the stage for an international conference.

Analysts and diplomats predict that it is highly improbable that Bush will be coaxed by Zionist and Israeli pressure into swimming against the international will and pursuing a policy of renegeing on and revoking the U.S.-PLO dialogue. They do, however, see two options in front of Bush: Working with the international community to encourage Israel to enter an international peace conference or he contended with the status quo.

Some analysts and diplomats agree that the Bush administration will work for peace since the PLO has met U.S. demands. Furthermore, Bush's familiarity with the region and the conflict, warmer relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and the change in attitudes in the U.S. and Israel are seen as positive indicators of serious efforts for peace.

The Soviet ambassador in Jordan, Alexander Zinchuk, believes that chances of the Americans applying pressure on Israel have improved considerably.

"The inflexible Israeli stand can be changed through American pressure," said Zinchuk, adding that although Soviet-Israeli contacts have been ongoing, "we are talking to the Israelis to convince them that the situation can not continue nor is it in the Israelis' interest for it to continue."

"But we think that we should work through the Americans to apply pressure on Israel."

The ambassador hopes that the Israeli desire to reestablish ties with the Soviet Union will be a decisive factor for any Israelis to opt for peace.

Another diplomat who follows American politics closely contends that the Americans are likely to pressure Israel to soften its stand in order to protect their own interests in the region and "Israel against its own will."

"The American administration has broken the Kissinger agreement. Their credibility in front of their people and the world is on the line. It is in their best interests to advise Israeli policymakers to come to grips with realities — that the PLO is the representative of the Palestinian people, and for Israel to live in peace with its neighbours, it has to negotiate a peace agreement with the PLO and the Arabs."

A political commentator and general director of Al Kutba Publishing House, Rami Khoury, believes that the U.S. decision to talk to the PLO was a historically inevitable recognition of the PLO.

"They (the U.S.) have already made the most important press move by recognising the PLO," said Khoury.

Bush, the man

The PLO's explicit acceptance of U.S. conditions and the American recognition of the PLO are not the only encouraging indicators. Analysts and diplomats are optimistic about Bush, the man.

Assad Abdul Rahman, member of the Palestine National Council (PNC) and general director of the Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation, describes Bush's past as head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as positive since "it will steer his policies away from ideology and towards pragmatism."

Abdul Rahman sees Reagan as "not only a converted Zionist but also a believer in a perverted kind of Christianity, a political religion, which includes the strategic story of what Israel means to the U.S...."

On the other hand, "Bush has learnt to be practical and pragmatic. He is a bureaucrat which is especially important in this new age of pragmatism," says Abdul Rahman.

"Given Bush's familiarity with the region and all developments and changes since 1982, the new president will not have any excuse to delay pushing the peace process forward," according to Abdul Rahman.

Abdul Rahman also comments on the new Soviet era, saying the Soviet Union has played a major role in the region "directly through the European countries," and that its policy has been one dominated by "pragmatism" — it made some concessions so that all parties will make concessions. Afghanistan, the Gulf war and Namibia are examples of conflicts solved through "pragmatism" and concessions.

On this point, Ambassador Zinchuk says: "We have seen that Gorbachev's calls for solutions to regional issues as crucial to solving world problems have been correct. To a certain degree, progress has been made in many areas around the world. There is a possibility in Gorbachev's thinking to solve Middle East crises."

Zinchuk believes that the Americans will eventually support the Soviet Union's calls for an effective international conference and for Israel to withdraw to pre-1967 borders.

The American views of the Soviet role in the region, Zinchuk says, reflect strategic changes in the U.S. policy. "The U.S. used to claim that the Soviet Union had no interests in the region," he said. "Later, they agreed that the Soviet Union may have interests, but stood against any Soviet role in an international conference. Now it has accepted that the Soviet Union will participate in any peace process. However, differences of interpretations of an international conference remain between the Soviet Union and the U.S."

"Crack in the Israeli wall"

The U.S. administration is also seen as possibly more willing to apply pressure on Israel because of the shift in the American public opinion and the polarisation within Israel and among world Jewry.

Abdul Rahman points out that Jewish sympathy with the Palestinians is on a gradual increase. He refers to a recent opinion poll in Israel which shows that 54 per cent of the Israeli people want their government to talk to the PLO if it lived up to its commitment to halt "terrorism."

There are other indications of "the crack in the Israeli wall." The Peace Now movement in Israel is calling for an end to occupation and for negotiations with the PLO and with cabinet minister Mordechai Gur's statement that the PLO's representatives could be partners in Middle East peace efforts if the PLO took practical steps of showing it was committed to halting "terrorism."

Abdul Rahman notes that many Labour Party members are opting for the Likud position, which aims to impose autonomy, to quell the intifada, and to expel Palestinians from the occupied territories.

A former minister and leader of the Democratic Unionist gathering, Jamal Al Shaer, says that the success of the intifada, the unity of the PLO factions and the slowly emerging unity of the majority of the Arab countries have brought about a change of attitude even within the Jewish community and lobby in the U.S. exerting an obvious influence on policymakers, especially in the U.S. Congress, and to a great extent in the White House and State Department.

The Soviet ambassador also points to the change in American public opinion which may have an effect on the U.S. policy towards Israel.

On the other hand, several analysts strongly disagreed that Bush would be dealing with the issue immediately or would apply pressure on Israel to enter the peace process on internationally agreed terms. They say that the controversial nature of the issue, past U.S. dealings with the Palestinians, U.S.-Israeli ties and interests and Israeli intransigence will lead the U.S. to pursue a policy which promotes the status quo and aims to ease international pressure and isolation and to end the intifada.

University of Jordan professor of political science Kamel Abu Jaber does not see the Bush administration dealing with "such a thorny issue," in any hurry after entering the White House.

The Bush administration is more likely to choose an issue that they will have immediate success in, "especially since Bush is very familiar with the Israeli attitude which has been negative, whether Labour or Likud," Abu

Jaber said. He pointed out that the American decision to talk with the PLO "needs time to ferment in the minds of most Americans who until recently have been filled with anti-PLO slogans."

Abu Jaber, like other analysts, believes that the American dialogue with the PLO was brought about by international pressure and the intifada, representing a non-violent rejection of occupation. However, the analysts refer to the manner in which the U.S. has dealt the issue over the past several decades and thus do not see any strong enough reason for the Americans, to change the policy.

Columnist Tareq Masarweh points to the 1970s "when conditions were more favourable for peace," and yet nothing crystallised.

"During those years the U.S. did not have a strategic alliance; it did not give such enormous quantities of weapons to Israel. Actually ex-President Carter tied an Israeli weapons deal to an arms package for Saudi Arabia. Carter also spoke of the rights of the Palestinian people and said that they were to enter the peace process under the name Palestine."

"Since Carter's time, each consecutive American administration has become progressively more pro-Israeli," said Masarweh, adding that he expects no marked diversion from this trend. "The Bush administration may lessen its support for Israel, but there will be no essential change."

Supporting Masarweh, PNC member and head of the Jerusalem Centre for Development Studies Abdul Jawad Saleh traces the PLO's policy back to 1974. "The PLO's position has been clear since 1974 and the PNC resolutions of 1974 indicate to anyone who wants to proceed with peace efforts that the PLO wants peace."

The 1974 PNC resolutions called for the establishment of a national authority on any liberated part of Palestine. However, the U.S. response to the PNC resolution "was to deny that there was a new process being created in the PLO, a process with clearly indicated that the PLO was not bent on destroying Israel. The Americans did not encourage this new direction."

He denounced the PLO's moves, labelled the PLO a "terrorist group," and continued to strengthen Israel militarily."

Other indicators of the lack of U.S. seriousness is the American demand for further concessions from the PLO in an attempt to end the intifada and to sidestep an effective international conference by calling for direct negotiations in specific fields, from a fight against the pledge of hard drugs which has swept through the subcontinent to greater convergence of views and policies.

According to a declaration issued after the three-day summit, before the century is out, the constituent nations will have worked their way through a broad framework to harmonise policies. Coordination in sectors such as food, clothing, shelter, education, primary health care, population planning and environmental protection is provided for in the so-called Islamabad Declaration.

The member countries would identify the areas of core interest in their respective national plans and implement them in concert with the plans of other SAARC nations. Specific targets will have to be met by the end of the century.

The drug issue, in fact, may become one of the first tests of such coordination. Drug abuse has risen alarming throughout the subcontinent. In the absence of cooperation among the countries in the past, the drug trafficking could not be stopped. If the smugglers' routes are sealed in Pakistan, the drug finds outlets in India. With all the regional countries agreeing to work together the chances are that the drug traffic and abuse will be controlled to a great extent, if not eradicated — Academic File.

The U.S. and Israeli demand that the PLO recognise Israel's "right to exist" was seen by some foreign analysts as an attempt to commit the PLO to a direct, unequivocal acceptance of Israel and to give Israel international respectability and recognition.

Godfrey Jansen of the London-based Middle East International says that this demand substituted the initial condition laid down by the U.S. and Israel five years ago which was a revision of the Palestinian charter to eliminate "threats" to the Zionist state.

On Dec. 10, Secretary of State George Shultz said the U.S. conditions were: unqualified acceptance of 242, acceptance of Israel's right to exist and renunciation of terrorism. Two days later, Israel reported a new list of U.S. conditions: recognition of Israel's "sovereignty," of its right to exist within secure and recognised boundaries, unqualified acceptance of 242 and renunciation of terrorism, according to Jansen.

"The U.S. and Israel are also beginning to insert yet another new demand: an end to the intifada. The argument is that if 'terror' is to renounce then any violence, meaning the intifada, must also be renounced," he said.

A journalist for the Arabic paper Al Dustour and a political commentator, Hamadeh Faraaneh, commenting on the first round of talks between American officials and the PLO in Tunis, said: "The American ambassador in Tunis said that the Americans regard these discussions as part of getting to know the Palestinian point of view. This will benefit the U.S. goals, as the U.S. understands them, to help the involved sides (including the PLO) to have direct negotiations and to reach a settlement."

Saleh, Abu Jaber and Shaer agree that the Americans "gave the impression that the intifada and the status quo should not continue."

A final factor which cannot be overlooked and may have a major effect on U.S. policy is the Israeli defiance. Time and time again Israeli leaders have stressed that they will not "bow down to the U.S."

The increase of casualties in the occupied territories since the American's decision to talk with the PLO is a direct signal to Washington and a message to the world that Israel will accept peace on no-one's terms. "They (the Israelis) are giving a message to the U.S. that 'we do not care, we have our own policies and we won't comply with yours'," said Saleh.

Najwa Najjar is a staff reporter at the Jordan Times.

SAARC — high aims, low profile

By M. Idrees Bakhtiar

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Keeping a low profile but high aims within their sights, the leaders of South Asian nations have given the clearest indication yet that they intend to try and catch up with the rest of Asia before this century is out. Their goal was encapsulated in "SAARC 2000" — virtually a charter for development in the area encompassing Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Behind the futurist title lies what the leaders modestly call a "basic needs perspective" aimed at improving the lot of the 1,018 million people that inhabit the subcontinent.

With annual gross national product per person ranging from \$150 (Bhutan and Nepal) to \$400 (Sri Lanka), the SAARC region

is one of the poorest concentrations of people in Asia. It is, however, also one of the most ambitious and enterprising communities in the world, seeking a foothold on the 21st century against obvious and heavy odds.

The contradictions of the region, however, were not high on the agenda of SAARC leaders who converged on the Pakistani capital in December to emphasise and explore new areas of cooperation. The high point of the palaver was not any multi-lateral conference but a bilateral summit between India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his newly elected Pakistani counterpart, Benazir Bhutto.

It was, by all signs, a preliminary encounter between the leaders of the traditional rivals and former combatants in wars over Kashmir, who pledged in an

agreement not to attack each other's nuclear power facilities — a source of long-standing friction — but seemed to have been agreed on little else besides of any significance.

India is at the centre of controversy in Pakistan over the purpose and direction of SAARC, which was formed four years ago. Critics sceptical of SAARC's protestations of mutual cooperation and peaceful coexistence consider the body a pretext for India to impose its will on its neighbours. This view has been reinforced, according to these critics, by the dispatch of Indian peacekeeping forces to Sri Lanka and recently to the Maldives to thwart a coup attempt.

The critics argue that uneven as its composition is — from tiny Bhutan to the giant India — the chances of SAARC ever achiev-

ing consensus on key issues are very remote.

Other critics allege that SAARC is an attempt to detach Pakistan from Middle Eastern sphere, specially Saudi Arabia, with whom it has strong political, religious and economic links. The argument draws strength from the fact that Pakistan and Bangladesh are the only Muslim states in the club. Again, the critics argue, if Pakistan loses those moorings, India will emerge as the preeminent power of the region.

While that political argument remains inconclusive, the economic and social aspects of SAARC have become more pronounced, leading sceptics to believe that some good may come out of the association after all.

Attention at the summit was focused on multilateral coopera-

tion in specific fields, from a fight against the pledge of hard drugs which has swept through the subcontinent to greater convergence of views and policies.

According to a declaration issued after the three-day summit, before the century is out, the constituent nations will have worked their way through a broad framework to harmonise policies. Coordination in sectors such as food, clothing, shelter, education, primary health care, population planning and environmental protection is provided for in the so-called Islamabad Declaration.

The member countries would identify the areas of core interest in their respective national plans

and implement them in concert with the plans of other SAARC nations. Specific targets will have to be met by the end of the century.

The drug issue, in fact, may become one of the first tests of such coordination. Drug abuse has risen alarming throughout the subcontinent. In the absence of cooperation among the countries in the past, the drug trafficking could not be stopped. If the smugglers' routes are sealed in Pakistan, the drug finds outlets in India. With all the regional countries agreeing to work together the chances are that the drug traffic and abuse will be controlled to a great extent, if not eradicated — Academic File.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Going too far

IN a column published in Al Dustour Tuesday, economics columnist Abdullah Malki warned from going overboard with talk about economic austerity measures and belt-tightening to curb current public spending.

The writer argued that the government was going too far in carrying out some belt-tightening measures such as restricting the use of government vehicles.

"It is quite disturbing for me to see that things have reached the point of operating patrol cars on holidays to apprehend those who use government cars, including ministry under secretaries or secretaries general," Malki wrote.

He pointed out that the Kingdom's total expenditure stood at JD1,035 million of which 66.5 per cent are current spending for consumer items and services. He said this percentage amounts to JD688.9 million of total spending compared to JD661 million the government spent last year, an increase of only 4.3 per cent.

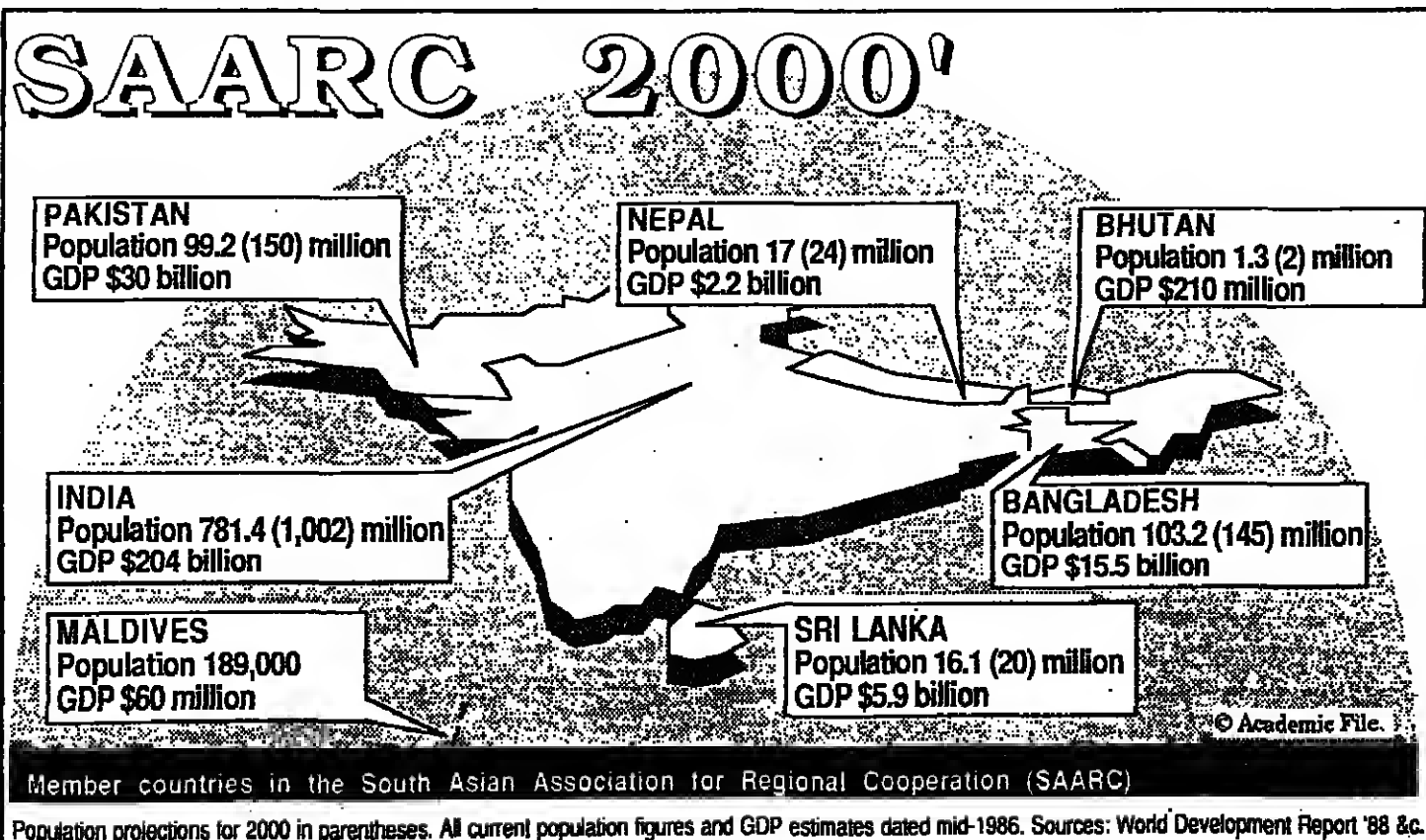
He said that compared to previous years, the increase in spending was modest. However, the columnist added, revenues cannot cope with this spending

"which shows the nature of the present financial dilemma."

Spending, he said, was distributed on 95 items on the budget with most items maintaining allocations similar to those of last year's budget with slight differences. The items that witnessed significant changes include the Ministry of Health budget (JD11 million less), armed forces, public security and civil defence allocations (JD4.5 million lower) standing at JD 251.5 million. Refugee relief allocations declined from JD 3 million to one million and allocations to subsidise basic farm products and industrial exports fell from JD12 million to JD6 million.

The large increases, he noted, were given to medical treatment institutions, going up from JD5 million to JD25 million. Interest on internal and external borrowing increased from JD 93 to JD 188 million. Pension allocations increased from JD62 million to JD74 million, and the radio and television budget was increased by JD1.5 million.

"It is clear that the structure of current spending does not enjoy the flexibility that allows for a squeeze on spending as officials and citizens would like," Malki remarked.



Customary, tribal law still governs much of Africa

By David Ross
Nairobi — In some parts of Africa a goat-thief, instead of being hauled before a judge, might be told by tribal elders to brew beer for the whole community.

"That way, you pay a price, but it's not too bad because you have a party," said one civil servant in the Central African nation of Burundi.

"You're not too upset, neither is the victim, so life can go on without strain," he said.

Customary law, in which disputes are settled by village or tribal elders, governs daily life for many Africans, setting guidelines and sanctions for anything from selling land to getting married, from punishing criminals to burying the dead.

"Out in the hills, almost any problem goes to elders, except for murder or cattle theft, when the police step in," said the civil servant in Burundi.

An emphasis on a communal spirit and on promoting social harmony is what distinguishes customary law, and is what many African legal scholars find attractive about it.

In Uganda, many of the elected village and parish councils set up since 1986 by the government of President Yoweri Museveni have adopted customary law for most day-to-day affairs.

In neighbouring Kenya, however, parliament has exempted criminal law, contracts, succession and most civil law suits from the customary legal system.

"Officially, parliament and the government have reduced the

scope for customary law, but as far as the communities are concerned, there are many occasions where they use customary precepts of law," said Kivutha Kibwana, a law professor at Nairobi University.

"When there are disputes, people try to settle them themselves... even in criminal matters, there are cases when a community wants to resolve a matter — in cases of death, a clan will decide it has to pay to recompense the victim's family, even if the police have taken up the matter themselves," Kibwana said.

When customs conflict with laws based on European codes, some African lawyers argue that custom should prevail.

"Why must we have British common law, or Roman law — we have our own legal traditions and they are just as good," said Sudanese Justice Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Hassan Al Tourabi during a recent visit to Nairobi.

But in Sudan, Al Tourabi's alternative — a system based on Islamic Sharia Law but providing some scope for traditional codes to govern the affairs of non-Muslims — has sparked strong opposition and is helping fuel a five-year-old civil war in the mainly Christian and animist south of the country.

In Al Tourabi's system the basic relationship between citizen and society, including criminal law, will be governed by sharia — and rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army say that until the Khartoum government freezes plans to implement Shar-

ia, the civil war will continue.

Other African countries have also tried to define basic political relations by looking to their own traditions and culture.

"When in Tanzania, they tried communal ownership in the Ujamaa (socialist) villages, they looked to traditional law to see whether it could justify this new socialism that they were trying to build," said Kibwana.

But Tanzania has since backtracked, and as it moved towards a more free-market oriented system few of those cooperative villages and communal farms and factories survive.

There are other hazards in traditional systems, too.

"Malawi talked about disputes being settled by elders, but what they did was to remove treason and political offences from the courts and give them to the elders," Kibwana said.

"Then the government can tell the elders what to do, so there is no due process of the law," he said.

But Kibwana thinks customary law, no matter how politically popular or advantageous to a government it may be, faces an uncertain future.

Commercial disputes cannot be settled by traditional means and in the long run that will undermine customary legal systems, he said.

"What will happen now, if you are owed a debt and it goes on and you are not paid — will you then do the traditional thing and say, oh, you're my brother, there is no debt anymore?" said Kibwana.

The Arab Loaf

Seven out of 10 loaves in the Arab world still are made from imported grain...



Food self-sufficiency is a serious challenge to Arab countries. Unless agriculture is given priority NOW a third of people in the area could starve by 2000.

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Arab food outlook — depressing

The outlook for Arab food production will remain gloomy until concerted efforts are made to produce a "100 per cent Arab loaf of bread."

By Fabrizio Fontemaggi

ROME — Until a few years ago, agronomists at Rome's FAO headquarters and elsewhere were optimistic that the Arab World, awash with cash but needing a non-oil infrastructure, will create its own granary in a fertile "backyard" like the Sudan, Yemen or Morocco.

Several millions of dollars in fact were pumped into tentative projects aimed at creating such a

storehouse of food for a population comparable to the United States not only in size but also in growing appetites. But, nearly a decade later, the collective Arab farm remains a dream, the efforts of food strategists or idealists thwarted by a combination of politics, natural disasters and shrinking revenues from oil exports.

Sudan, "sold" until a few years ago by its leaders as the future granary of the Arab World, is in

the grip of a famine. The projects in other countries earmarked for joint Arab investment have been affected by cash shortages or procedural difficulties.

Now the crunch seems to be approaching. Arab food experts who met in Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates, in December saw gloomy prospects for food self-sufficiency in the Arab World. At least a third of the Arab World's population, they warned, could be starving by the year 2000. The political implications of the resulting dependence on imports were judged to be too fearsome to contemplate.

"Arab states should take serious measures to produce a loaf of bread that is totally Arab, because this represents the safety valve for food security," the conference was told. Seven out of 10 loaves baked in the Arab World are believed to be made from imported grain.

"The Arab World is not the only group of people dependent on food, but its dependency is worrying because the one thing that the Arab states can fall back upon, i.e. oil, has not proven to be a secure as originally believed," said one observer.

With oil prices hovering below the OPEC basic price of \$18 a barrel, the experts believe that the Arab states need to move quickly away from costly food imports and redirect the money into infrastructural investments.

Experts at the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organisation have voiced concern for several years at the Arab World's food import bill, which was a whopping \$25 billion in 1987.

Although agricultural development in individual countries, particularly those in the Gulf, has been little short of dramatic, the experts point out, agriculture in the Arab World as a whole has

not kept pace with population growth, urbanisation and industrial development.

Edouard Saouma, the Lebanese director-general of the U.N. agency, in recent remarks expressed concern that the Middle East's dependency on food had jumped sharply within two decades.

"Oil and petrochemical industries (have) depleted the agricultural work force but there (has) been no compensating increase in the region's productivity," he said. New policies, new priorities and a new allocation of resources in favour of agriculture were required urgently.

The recent locust threat experienced by the Gulf countries has added a new dimension, convincing experts that Arab countries are just as vulnerable to natural disasters as their African neighbours. "For too long, agricultural experts in North Africa tended to see the rest of the continent as their backyard and no more," said an expert. "The locust threat illustrated the problem," he added, and jolted many planners out of their complacency.

While the Gulf states in recent years have concentrated resources on developing their agriculture, against heavy odds (such as shortage of manpower), North Africa has felt increasingly exposed despite abundant and cheap labour.

Meagre cash resources and the "shadow of Africa" south of the Sahara have given rise to fears that when the crunch comes, Arab countries in North Africa will be the first to feel it.

"If there is a famine in the Arab World, and if one doesn't count what's happening already in the Sudan, it will start in North Africa and put tremendous pressure on the rest of the Arab community," said one analyst. — Academic File.



Development of anti-depressants has been tremendous.

Sweden refutes suicide myth

By Eva Ahlberg
Reuter

STOCKHOLM — Sweden has provided new proof to refute the myth that it tops the world's suicide league.

Figures from the central bureau of statistics show that while suicides in other countries, particularly in Nordic neighbours, are still on the rise, Swedish figures have been stable since 1980 and are well short of several other nations.

"We have more knowledge about the problem today and the development of anti-depressants has been tremendous. Now there is a realistic possibility that the curve will remain steady," said Danntä Wasserman, a leading Swedish suicide researcher.

Wasserman, psychiatrist at Stockholm's prestigious Karolinska Institute, recently completed a study on suicide in Stockholm between 1975 and 1985.

The findings show that suicides have decreased significantly in the capital over that period. The only groups that registered an increase were men aged 45 to 54 and women of 65 and above.

"While the study is generally positive, it is very disturbing to see that so many older women are committing suicide. The only reason I can think of is that it is difficult for them to integrate socially at that age," Wasserman said.

National statistics for 1986 show Sweden had 18.6 suicides per 100,000 inhabitants. By comparison, Denmark had a corresponding figure of 28.5, while Finland had 25.1 and Norway 13.9.

The country at the top of the world's suicide league is Hungary, with 43.2 suicides per 100,000 inhabitants, according to figures supplied by the United Nations.

"Compared with a few years ago, the situation in Sweden has improved, and hopefully it will get even better," she said.

Wasserman also denied the theory that Sweden's long winters and chilly climate could be a

reason for the relatively high suicide rate.

"The interesting thing is that the rate is not higher during our long winters. On the contrary, the suicide rate tends to increase in the midst of the summer," she said.

The reason, she said, could be that already hard-pressed relationships often culminate in catastrophe during holiday periods when people spend more time together and pressure to have fun increases.

Another recent study done by Dr. Agnes Hultén of Gavle Hospital in central Sweden showed that teenage suicides had also eased during the past 15 years.

The study, on youths aged between 10 and 29, showed no increase, although international reports have indicated that teenage suicide is on the rise worldwide.

But it pointed to a levelling out in the gap between the sexes in the methods they choose for suicide.

"During the 1980s young women have started to abandon the so called passive ways, including using sleeping pills, and are instead turning to the traditional male methods, such as hanging themselves," she said.

Hultén joined her colleague in saying no significant difference could be seen in the suicide rate for Swedish teenagers during the various months of the year.

But despite the new studies, Wasserman said suicide was still a leading cause of death for both men and women between 15 and 44 years of age.

And it may still be some time until the suicide myth is buried in the past, as it has become something of a Swedish trademark, even something to joke about.

"We have funny drinking habits, copulate diligently and then commit suicide after paying a dreadful amount of tax," said Swedish actor Einar Josephson of his country's image abroad.

Empress Michiko, the commoner who broke imperial tradition

Reuter

TOKYO — The new Empress of Japan met her husband on a tennis court at a resort north of Tokyo some 30 years ago.

The eldest daughter of a weal-

thy flour company executive, Michiko was considered a commoner and her marriage to the then crown prince was seen in Japan as epoch-breaking event.

For many Japanese, she was a cinderella figure, plucked from

obscurity by Prince Akihito to become eventual Empress of Japan.

Her marriage broke an imperial tradition that required the crown prince's wife be chosen from women of the imperial family or the peerage.

Their wedding parade, broadcast nationwide by television, helped shrink the distance between the imperial family and the people that had built up before Emperor Hirohito renounced his divinity at the end of World War II.

After her marriage, Michiko maintained a keen interest in sports and surprised a Japanese medal winner at the Seoul Olympics when they met at party here with her knowledge of synchronised swimming.

She also broke tradition when she decided to bring up her three children at home rather than send them off to a private tutor outside

the palace.

That caused the press to idolise her as the ideal Japanese mother.

One of her main preoccupations has been to help find a suitable partner for her 28-year-old son Hiro, now crown prince and heir to Japan's chrysanthemum throne.

When meeting ordinary people, Michiko often went up to talk to them, something unheard of in the past.

A graduate from the English literature department at Sacred Heart Women's University in Tokyo in 1957, Michiko is known for her interest in the arts. She is an honorary vice-president of the Japanese Red Cross Society.

Michiko plays the harp and sometimes provides piano accompaniment for her husband's cello and her son's viola.

She underwent a uterus operation early in 1986 but seemed to recover fully and resumed official duties after a half-year rest.

A new crown prince

Reuter

TOKYO — Crown Prince Hiro, newly next in line to Japan's chrysanthemum throne, is a medieval scholar and the country's most eligible bachelor.

The 28-year-old prince, eldest son of new Emperor Akihito and grandson of Emperor Hirohito who died early Saturday after 62 years rule, has not been hedged in by many of the traditions which have surrounded the Japanese imperial family for centuries.

Hiro, who has a younger brother and a sister, has lived since birth with his parents, unlike his father and grandfather who were given to others to raise in early infancy.

In 1983, he became the first heir to the throne to study abroad — he studied medieval European transport and economics at Oxford University's Merton College.

He also spoke more frankly than any of his predecessors when he discussed his choice of a bride at a news conference in 1986.

"I prefer someone not too extravagant. Not someone who would buy this and that at Tiffany's in New York," he said.

The prince who stands 1.63 metres tall, said he would not place great importance on family, academic background, nor physical height in his choice of a partner. "A person who is modest but who will speak her own mind when necessary is desirable," he said.

Since he returned from Oxford in 1985, the prince has increasingly been engaged in official functions as a member of the imperial family.

In October 1987, with his grandfather Hirohito sick in hospital and his father — then Crown Prince Akihito — on an official visit to the United States, Hiro temporarily assumed state ceremonial duties for the first time.

He has been a post-graduate student at Gakushuin University in Tokyo, where he chose "maritime transport in Japan's inland sea in the 14th-16th centuries," as his thesis.

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Sam The Man

Sri Lanka's state of emergency to end soon

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka's five-year-old state of emergency will end Sunday and political detainees found to have no evidence against them will be released as soon as possible, President Ranasinghe Premadasa said Tuesday.

The president told a meeting of officials in Colombo that the emergency, in force since May 1983 to tackle Tamil and Sinhalese guerrilla violence, will not be renewed after it expires Jan. 15.

Officials said the decision was taken because of declining violence in southern areas where the People's Liberation Front (JVP), a group of radical youths of the majority Sinhalese community, is trying to overthrow the government.

They said in the north and east Indian troops trying to end a Tamil separatist drive had taken

the sting out of a rebel group continuing the campaign.

A security official said most of Sri Lanka's 40,000-strong army would return to barracks once the emergency ended. The emergency gave security forces almost unlimited powers.

"We will only be able to help the police in security work where as under emergency laws the army conducts its own operations," he said.

Opposition groups have accused the security forces of killing or harming suspects during searches for rebels. Authorities have denied the allegations.

The security official said military operations were reduced in the south since last month's presidential poll because of less JVP activity.

"The election of Premadasa seems to have created an atmosphere of peace in Sri Lanka," he said.

Premadasa said the police strength of more than 26,000 men would be doubled to take over security duties from the security forces.

He ordered officials to speed up investigations against political detainees. "If there is no evidence, detainees should be released immediately," he said.

The detainees, many in jail for more than three months without trial, are suspected of involvement in Tamil or Sinhalese rebel activity.

The government said more

than 600 JVP suspects were released last week at Premadasa's request. Officials said there are another 1,600 detainees, mostly JVP suspects.

5 charged

Five suspected Sri Lankan rebels went on trial Tuesday for the attempted murder 17 months ago of former President Junius Jayewardene and the killing of two people in parliament.

A junior minister and an official were killed when two grenades were lobbed into a room in parliament during a meeting Aug. 18, 1987 of the ruling United National Party.

Jayewardene, who chaired the meeting, was unhurt but five ministers were seriously wounded in the attack, blamed by police on the Marxist People's Liberation Front.



PEOPLES RIGHTS: Africans at Beijing Languages Institute boycotted classes last week to protest the racial attacks on African students in China.

Soviets to quit Hungary

BUDAPEST (Agencies) — Soviet troops are to begin withdrawing from Hungary within weeks, Hungarian Communist Party leader Karoly Grosz was quoted as saying Tuesday.

Defence Minister Colonel General Ferenc Karpati said in an unusual nighttime interview with Hungarian television that preparations for the withdrawal of "major military units," including an armoured division, was nearing completion.

He gave no firm date for the start of the pullout.

The state news agency MTI quoted Grosz as telling the Japanese newspaper Nihon Keizai Shimbun that the pullout "is to commence within weeks."

The Soviet Union has some 62,000 troops stationed in Hungary, according to the Communist Party daily Nepszabadsag.

Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev announced in a speech to the United Nations Dec. 7 that the Soviet Union

would unilaterally withdraw some 50,000 troops from Hungary, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia over the next two years.

Five-thousand Soviet tanks are also to be withdrawn.

Hungary, which like Poland has announced major cuts in its defence spending this year, gave an enthusiastic welcome to Gorbachev's announcement. Karpati said then the withdrawal would affect about a quarter of the Soviet troops stationed in Hungary.

Hungary's opposition

Hungary's parliament Tuesday opened debate on new legislation to pave the way for a multi-party system and legalise political demonstrations in this Communist country.

Justice Minister Kalman Kulcsar told a packed session the reforms would give the people "a basic right which is not the gift of the state."

"The modernisation of Hunga-

rian society cannot develop further within the framework of an authoritarian political system," he added.

The proposed law of association would give private citizens the right to form political parties while a separate bill on the right of assembly would limit the power of the authorities to ban public demonstrations.

Hungary's Communist Party, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), has held a monopoly of power since 1948. Until recently public demonstrations were banned.

If passed, the law of assembly would give citizens only the right in principle to form political parties. An additional law must be passed before they are able to exercise that right.

Deputy Justice Minister Geza Kilenyi was quoted Tuesday by the trade union daily Nepszava as saying the draft of this additional law would be finalised by mid-February.

450 Cubans quit Angola

FUNDA (AP) — Cuban soldiers prepared to begin withdrawing from Angola Tuesday as part of an agreement intended to bring peace to Southern Africa and independence to Namibia after U.N.-sponsored elections.

On Monday, children thrust flowers into the hands of officers and soldiers as they said goodbye to the first of 3,000 Cubans scheduled to leave by April 1.

Defence Minister Pedro Maria Tinha told the men assembled at a military training camp: "Don't ever forget Angola, because you fought and died here."

The first 450 Cubans depart Tuesday, in a symbolic airlift, under terms of the agreement mediated by the United States and signed Dec. 22 by Angola, Cuba and South Africa. The rest of the troops are expected to

return to Cuba by ship.

Angola and Cuba have asked the United Nations to pay the estimated \$800-million cost of sending the estimated 50,000 Cubans home from Angola.

Not included in the agreement are rebels fighting Angola's Marxist government with U.S. and South African support, and the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), a guerrilla group opposing South African control of Namibia.

Soldiers from Cuba arrived in July 1975 to support the government, which won control after independence from Portugal, in its battle with rebels of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

The United States has said it will continue military assistance

to UNITA until the government of President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos agrees to negotiate with the rebels.

Brigadier General Rafael Moracen Limonta said the departure was possible because South Africa agreed to withdraw from southern Angola, where its forces pursued SWAPO guerrillas, and allow independence in Namibia.

"The problem with UNITA is among the Angolans themselves," he said, standing with other officers on the parade ground. "We came here because of the South Africans."

Angola and South Africa agreed to a ceasefire in southern Angola Aug. 8, and South African troops withdrew into Namibia.

South Africa captured Namibia

from Germany in World War I and controlled it under a League of Nations mandate. The U.N. General Assembly ended the mandate in 1966, but South Africa had refused to leave.

All but a token South African force is to withdraw from the territory by Nov. 1, when Namibia is to hold its first free legislative elections.

Some questions remain about how 70 military and 20 civilian U.N. observers will monitor the departure of Cuban troops from a country 14 times the size of Portugal.

General Ferreira Gomes said he would rely on the "good word" of the Cubans and Angolans, but another military observer said privately his mission is "to count heads."

Costa Rica says summit is off

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) — The government of Costa Rica Monday said a Central American peace summit scheduled for Jan. 15-16 has been postponed. New dates were not specified.

"There definitely will not be a meeting of presidents," Foreign Minister Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto said at a news conference in the capital of San Jose. He said the presidents of Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica had agreed to the suspension.

"The new date will be negotiated, adjusting the agendas of the presidents and of the foreign ministers," he said.

Earlier Monday, the governments of El Salvador and Nicaragua said the summit should be held as scheduled rather than delayed, as prop-

osed by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias.

However, Salvadoran Foreign Minister Ricardo Acevedo said it could only be held if presidents of all the countries agree.

"We should negotiate and look for a consensus among the presidents and consensus means unanimity because you can't have a summit with only three or four presidents," Acevedo said. "We should be flexible and look for new dates."

Arias suggested Friday that the meeting be postponed to allow U.S. President-elect George Bush, who takes office Jan. 20, time to formulate a Central American policy.

Acevedo said Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte had advised Arias that

his proposal was being submitted to all five presidents.

In Managua, the Nicaraguan capital, President Daniel Ortega telephoned Arias Sunday to express "his concern about the postponement of the meeting," Ortega's press office said Monday.

Ortega said last week that postponing the meeting "could mean the death" of the Central American peace plan.

A Costa Rican foreign ministry official called the statement "out of line."

The Guatemalan government also has said it opposed delaying the meeting.

Honduras has not commented. Honduran President Jose Azcona Hoyo travelled Monday to Washington and was to meet Tuesday with President Reagan and Bush.

Acevedo said Jan. 29 and 30, or Feb. 20, were being considered as alternate dates.

He said a technical, preparatory meeting should be held as scheduled Tuesday and that a foreign ministers' meeting could be scheduled for Jan. 17 and 18.

Arias authored the Central American peace plan the five presidents signed in Guatemala City on Aug. 7. Its plan calls for greater democracy, an end to civil wars, political amnesties and an end to the use of one country by rebels fighting in another.

The plan has been stalled since the presidents last met in January 1988 in Costa Rica. Arias was awarded the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize for his work on the plan.

Thousands demand change in Yugoslavia

BELGRADE (AP) — Several thousand workers and university students staged a demonstration Tuesday in the capital of the southern Yugoslav Republic of Montenegro, demanding the ouster of the region's Communist leadership, the State Tanjug news agency reported.

A similar protest last October in Titograd was violently broken up by police and brief emergency measures were proclaimed throughout the republic to prevent an escalation of disturbances.

Tanjug said about 7,000 flag-waving protesters gathered in front of the Montenegrin parliament building and chanted Tuesday: "We want resignations" and "the people are hungry."

The angry crowd also deman-

ded responsibility of the Montenegrin leaders for using force during the Oct. 7-8 demonstrations.

"Who dares to beat the workers," the crowd shouted, according to Tanjug.

The October unrest, in which at least ten people were injured when police used tear gas and rubber truncheons to break up the crowds, triggered one of the worst political crises in Yugoslavia since World War II.

This was followed by warnings by Yugoslav President Raif Dizdarevic that unspecified emergency measures would be imposed throughout the country should the disturbances continue.

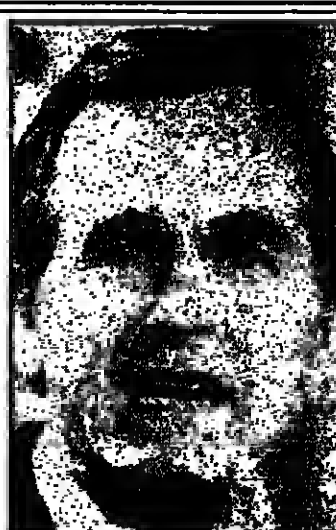
Tuesday's demonstration was led by workers of the Radje Dakic machine tool factory, who

went on strike to demand the resignations.

Following protests last year, the Montenegrin government, chiefly responsible for economic matters, submitted its resignation, while the Communist leadership, in charge of formulating policies, failed to do so.

At the time, the Montenegrin leadership, with the support of the country's northern regions, accused followers of Serbia's hardline Communist chief Slobodan Milosevic of attempting to stage a coup in Titograd, allegedly in order to bring Montenegro politically closer to Serbia.

Yugoslavia has been faced with its worst social and economic crisis in history, with annual inflation currently hovering at around 250 per cent.



George Bush

Bush claims mandate for policies

WASHINGTON (R) — President-elect Bush claimed Monday that his seven-million-vote margin of victory in the election represented a mandate for his policies on issues raised during the long and bitter campaign.

In a pep talk to transition workers and advisers, Bush appeared trying to build public support for programmes he will present to the Democratic-controlled Congress after he is sworn in Jan. 20.

"I think talk about an issueless, mandate-less election in unfair to the American people," Bush said.

In 1960, he noted, then President John Kennedy said "a majority of only one vote would still be a mandate."

"And in 1988 I think a majority of almost seven million votes — a four to one majority in the states and the electoral college — is a mandate too," he added.

This was Bush's clearest claim to a mandate since his Nov. 8 election victory over Democrat Michael Dukakis

North case picks up momentum

WASHINGTON (R) — Lawyers for former White House aide Oliver North said again Monday they needed access to classified documents for his defence even though the major charges against him in the Iran-contra case are being dropped.

Attorneys Brendan Sullivan and Barry Simon told Gesell they still needed 300 classified documents to defend against other charges pending against their client, including lying to Congress and accepting an illegal gift.

Independent counsel Lawrence Walsh said last week he wanted to drop charges of conspiracy to defraud the government and theft of government property by diverting funds from the sale of U.S. arms to Iran to help the contra fighting the Nicaraguan government.

Walsh said he was taking the action because the administration would not disclose classified information needed in the case on national security grounds.

U.S. Judge Gerhard Gesell, at



Oliver North and family: the secret account was to provide for their future.

a hearing Monday, put off granting Walsh's motion to drop the two major charges until Attorney General Richard Thornburgh submits an affidavit that he supports the action. The bugh has said he approves dropping the charges.

The trial is scheduled to start Jan. 31, but Gesell said he might have to delay it if the procedural questions are not resolved by then.

Walsh said he was reducing the number of witnesses he intended to call from 87 to 40 and told Gesell he hoped to complete the

prosecution's case in six to eight weeks. Simon said North's defence would take two to three months.

"It's going to be a wonderful summer," Gesell said. He scheduled a hearing Friday to consider other issues.

He said the defence's plans to question the authenticity of government documents could add two months to the trial and challenges over members of the jury could cause further delay.

Several demonstrators marched outside the courtroom urging Gesell not to allow the charges to be dropped.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Red Cross worker killed

GENEVA (AP) — A local Red Cross worker in Uganda was shot and killed Monday when a group of gunmen attacked a relief convoy, the International Committee of the Red Cross said. A delegate of the all-Swiss ICRC, Juerg Buehler, was injured in the attack between the town of Soroti and Amuria in eastern Uganda, an ICRC statement said. He was later flown to hospital in Nairobi, Kenya, and was said to be out of danger. The Ugandan Red Cross worker, Michael Egabu, a passenger in the car Buehler was driving, died on the spot, the ICRC said. Marjolaine Martin, a spokeswoman at the organisation's Geneva headquarters, said activities in the region were suspended after the incident but were expected to resume shortly. She said the gunmen, whose exact number was not reported, apologised to another ICRC delegate in the three-vehicle convoy and said the attack was a mistake. The convoy, which was bringing relief supplies to displaced people, was clearly marked with the organisation's emblem, the ICRC said.

6 killed in Natal

JOHANNESBURG (R) — A mob armed with clubs, spears and a shotgun killed five people, including two in their 60s, in black factional strife in South Africa's Natal province, police said Tuesday. The killings Monday were in Shongweni, one of dozens of black townships torn by violence which has killed more than 1,000 people in the past two years. A sixth person, a 17-year-old girl, was stabbed to death near the Natal provincial capital of Pietermaritzburg, police added in a brief daily summary of political unrest. Most of the Natal violence is the result of a territorial power struggle between supporters of the Zulu movement in Inkatha and the more left-wing United Democratic Front. Repeated peace initiatives have failed to quell the violence.

Greenpeace protest landing strip

BONN (AP) — About 20 Greenpeace activists dressed as penguins demonstrated in front of the French embassy Monday to protest the building of a landing strip at a French research station in the Antarctic. The environmentalists charged that the project, at the Dumont D'Urville station, is

damaging the ecology of the region and threatens the habitat of thousands of sea birds and penguins. Other Greenpeace activists have staged protests at the site and have attempted to block construction efforts. A Greenpeace statement released in West Germany said protesters had been roughed up by French officials at the site. The group is demanding an immediate construction halt.

Bush may attend Hirohito funeral

WASHINGTON (R) — George Bush may make his first foreign trip as president to attend the funeral of Japanese Emperor Hirohito, a senior aide hinted Monday. Craig Fuller was asked by reporters if Bush would attend the funeral of Hirohito, who died of cancer Saturday at the age of 87. Fuller told reporters with a smile there had not been a final decision yet but added: "I would expect you would have a foreign trip." Hirohito's funeral is due to be held Feb. 24. Bush, a World War II fighter pilot shot down in action against Japanese forces in the Pacific, will be inaugurated as president Jan. 20. Invitations have been sent to the more than 160 countries with which Japan has diplomatic relations. They are to reply by Jan. 24.

2 detained after grenade blast

MANILA (AP) — Two people were detained for questioning in the grenade attack on a weekend crowd attending a basketball tournament in which at least 13 people were killed and 89 others injured, the military said Tuesday. The military quoted Major Jaime Ponce, the Philippine constabulary spokesman in Cotabato, as saying no charges had been filed against the pair. The two were picked up after the assailants hurled two grenades at a crowd of about 1,000 people attending a basketball award ceremony in the remote town of Esperanza, about 960 kilometres south of Manila. Ponce did not identify the two, nor give any reason for the attack. Manila newspapers said many of the dead were children, but gave no figures. Their dispatches were based on radio reports from the area, which has no telephones. Sergeant Joven Astero of the constabulary office in Cotabato said the tournament had just ended and the town mayor, Romulo Latog Sr., was awarding trophies when the blasts occurred. Latog and his son, Romulo Jr., were among the injured, Astero said.

COLUMB

Protective mother loses appeal

WASHINGTON (AP) — A mother jailed since August 1987 for refusing to disclose the whereabouts of her daughter, whom she says was sexually abused by the child's father, lost a supreme court appeal Monday. The justices, without comment, let stand a contempt citation against Dr. Elizabeth Morgan, 41, who was imprisoned in August 1981 for defying a judicial order that she allow her daughter, Hilary, then 5, to spend a two-week unsupervised visit with Dr. Eric A. Foretich. Foretich is Hilary's father and Morgan's former husband. Morgan sent the child into hiding to protect her, she said, from sexual abuse by Foretich, who has denied abusing his daughter. Morgan has been held in civil contempt, imposed to coerce someone into complying with a court order. The citation requires imprisonment for an indefinite period. In her supreme court appeal, Morgan said her rights were violated because the judge conducted much of the hearing that led to the contempt citation in private. The judge, Herbert J. Dixon, said he was trying to protect Hilary from public disclosure of the details of her father's alleged sexual abuse. Many of the specific charges were made public in a separate suit against Foretich by Morgan. Dixon ruled in 1986 that Morgan failed to prove Foretich had abused Hilary. He said there was equal evidence on both sides of the case. The judge permitted brief supervised visits for the father, and in August 1987 granted Foretich a two-week unsupervised visit that led Morgan to send her daughter into hiding.

Columbo is back

NEW YORK (AP) — Peter Falk will return to television as "Columbo," the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) has announced. Falk made the rumpled detective a household name in the 1970s, and ABC television announced last year that he had signed on for a revival of the series. The new "Columbo" series was to have begun in the fall, but the writers' strike delayed production.

William Hurt transforms

NASHVILLE (AP) — William Hurt, who has spent the past decade racking up movie successes, says he is in the middle of a transformation like the character he portrays in his latest film, "The Accidental Tourist." "I am ready for a fuller, more complete relationship with people," Hurt said in an interview with the Sunday Tennessee. "It doesn't worry me so much for people to find out who I am." Hurt, who has gained a reputation as a reticent interviewee, said he had come a long way from the brooding introvert he was a few years ago. He also said he stopped drinking two years ago. "So many things were right about this film," he said, giving his relationship with Director Lawrence Kasdan credit for some of his satisfaction. The two also worked together on "The Big Chill." In "The Accidental Tourist," which also stars Kathleen Turner and Geena Davis, Hurt plays a travel writer whose world comes apart when his 12-year-old son dies and his marriage collapses. His life is restored through his relationship with a dog trainer, played by Davis.

\$50 million suit against Pan Am

NEW YORK (R) — The father of one of the victims of the Pan Am airliner bombing has filed a \$50 million lawsuit against the U.S. airline, saying lax security led to his son's death, his lawyer said Saturday. Cincinnati-based lawyer Stanley Chesley said the suit was filed in Detroit Thursday on behalf of petrol station owner Nazir Jaafar, whose 20-year-old son Khalid was killed in the crash of flight 103. The Boeing 747 fell on the Scottish town of Lockerbie last week, killing all 259 people aboard. Eleven people on the ground were also presumed dead. Jaafar is seeking \$15 million in compensatory damages and \$35 million in punitive damages in what is believed the first suit brought against Pan Am in connection with the tragedy. The case would seek to prove that tighter security at Pan Am would have prevented the crash, the lawyer said in a telephone interview from Cincinnati. Jaafar, a U.S. citizen who was a lawyer in Lebanon, owns a service station near Detroit. His son, who attended a local technical college, was returning from holiday in Europe.